

Dear Parishioners:

Next Saturday, May 22, one of our parishioners, Nilo DeLeon, will be ordained at St. Agnes Cathedral. We will have a special **Mass of Thanksgiving** on **SUNDAY, JUNE 13 at the 11:00am Mass**. I hope as many of you as possible will come and pray for and with Deacon Nilo on June 13.

Over the past few weeks, I have written about the Permanent Diaconate in general. Today, I would like to focus on the specific requirements and program of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Once a man has discerned a vocation or calling to the Permanent Diaconate, he applies to the Diocese to enter into the Formation Program. A man desiring to enter the Permanent Diaconate formation program must meet the following requirements:

- + Be a baptized and confirmed Catholic
- + Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- + Be 35 – 60 years old at the time of admission to the formation program
- + Be an active, registered parishioner at a parish in the Diocese of Rockville Centre
- + Have completed High School and be able to handle college-level academic work
- + Be *VIRTUS* certified

The Permanent Diaconate Program is a 4-year program with classes taking place almost every Saturday from September to May. The first year is called the **Aspirancy Year**. This year is largely devoted to spirituality. All four years focus on: Human Formation, Spiritual Formation, Academic Formation and Pastoral Formation. At the end of each year, the Deacon candidate submits a self-evaluation. The candidate also meets with his formation advisor and the Director of Diaconate Formation. Upon recommendation of the faculty, the individual may proceed to the next year of formation.

Of course, the wives and families of the deacon candidates are crucial, and there are programs/prayer days specifically are offered to the wives of the deacon candidates. For instance, three times a year, there is an afternoon for the wives of the deacon candidates and there is an annual weekend retreat as well.

As you can see, the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program is a very demanding one but one that allows the Diocese to ordain a very fine, competent group of deacons each year. Our parish, in particular, has been greatly blessed by our deacons. Let us continue to pray for our deacons and especially for Deacon Nilo as he begins his diaconal ministry here at Our Lady of Lourdes.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian

PS: Don't forget our **EASTER RAFFLE**. The drawing is next Sunday, March 23 (Feast of Pentecost), after the 12:30pm Mass. Details are in the Bulletin: \$25 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$100. You have to be in it to win it!