

May 18, 2025     *A Letter from Deacon Frank De Frank*

After 24 years of active deaconate ministry and after a long period of thought, prayer, and a dose of realism, I have concluded that now is the appropriate time for me to retire. This becomes effective July 1. At this moment, Pat and I find ourselves thankful and grateful for having spent the last 17 years of our lives with all of you here at St. Patrick. Thank you, Fr. Dunn, Monsignor Dempsey, and Fr. Jerry.

As I look back to the beginning of my “call,” I am reminded it wasn’t a “slam dunk.” Over 15 years I was encouraged to apply for the deaconate. I always declined believing being an active layman was where I was to be. But to paraphrase Francis Thompson’s poem, while I fled him down the nights and down the days ... down the arches of the years, the Hound of Heaven stayed the course. God knew that in the end, even a Sicilian could get it!!!!

One day, I got an invitation to explore the deaconate. Where did that come from? I responded step by step discerning over three years asking the question, why me? Why me? Finally, in loving exasperation the Lord said, “Frankie D”, as usual, you are asking the wrong question. The real question is, “What would you have me do, Lord? The answer: Have faith, trust and love... listen and be patient, leave the unfolding of the plan to me. Your “yes” is enough for now. A divine lesson for all times.

On that day 24 years ago, I announced that I was devoting my ministry to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to his mother Mary. Jesus, all of him, body, blood, soul and divinity, is present to us in the Blessed Sacrament. Can we even fathom that our Jesus, the Son of God, wants so much to be a part of us and we in him? He waits with infinite patience, understanding and love in hopes we will come to speak to him, and to listen to him... who wants us to lean on him and to pour out our hearts to him. He makes himself present to us at Mass, at times of Eucharistic adoration and during the day for a drop in. It is the Eucharist in whom we live and have our being. What a gift Pat and I have been given to be assigned to a parish whose mission is to be a Eucharistic people. Our Eucharistic liturgies highlight and emphasize that commitment.

Mary’s YES is all we need to know about her place in God’s plan. The author, Carol Houelander, calls Mary the “Reed of God” who emptied herself to see and hear God’s voice and so she was filled with God’s grace. She is a wonderful role model for us. Who cannot love and respect and emulate the mother of our God. If we are to hear God speaking to us and if we are to respond, we must hollow out the reed of our selfishness and unencumber ourselves from anything that gets in the way of God playing the mystical music of his Spirit in our hearts. It takes a lifetime, but we are called to replay the music one note at a time in our thoughts, words, and actions.

I look back on these 24 years—17 of which were at St. Patrick—realizing that what Pat and I did could not have even begun without so many of our parishioners: together on committees, on projects, on liturgies, on teaching to Confirmation candidates and RCIA candidates and to our work with Ministries of Care to hospitals and to rehabilitation facilities. It wasn’t all smooth, but it was always rewarding in the end.

Finally, Pat and I will continue to be active members of St. Patrick. You can never get enough of a good thing! Though retired, with permission, I can receive diaconal faculties for specific liturgical services as opportunities arise. AGAIN, Pat and I thank you for how welcoming you were when we came to St. Patrick. We are the better for having had you in our lives. You will remain in our prayers. Keep us in yours. PRAISE BE JESUS CHRIST, NOW AND FOREVER.

Deacon Frank de Frank