

# AD LUCEM!



INSTITUTE FOR  
DIACONAL STUDIES

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**TO: INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES COMMUNITY**  
**FROM: DEACON BOB PUHALA, DIRECTOR**



## Director's Message

My wife and I love to travel – just hop into the F150 and drive away. Most of the time, our truck heads south to Tennessee or Georgia or Texas. The pace is slower there, the talk is slower, it's much easier to just enjoy each other and embark on another "into the wild" adventure. The last time we were on the road, one of our more civilized stops was Sacred Heart Cathedral in Knoxville, TN. After a quick prayer for family and friends, we took a look around and I spotted on a table a handout about discernment. What a coincidence, I thought while winking to the Lord for this little surprise! It covered some of the usual ground about discernment and gave a link to the cathedral's website for those who wanted more. So I grabbed my iPhone, tapped in the web address, and discovered a succinct treasure trove about discernment that I think will be very helpful to all of you. (It also had me wondering, "Why didn't you think of doing this, pal?") So thanks to the Knoxville Diocese for the following reflection on discernment!

The word discernment comes from a Latin word meaning "to sift apart." When we discern, we try to "sift apart" different possibilities in the hopes of finding the one that is most positive and life giving. The discipline and practice of discernment can happen on a variety of levels and in different circumstances (i.e. trying to determine which college to attend, discerning between different job possibilities or possible areas to move to, *or in our journey, trying to discern our call to Holy Orders (my italics).*

Here are some tried and true aids to help in discernment.

- **Prayer** – In order to hear God's call we need to take time to listen. Prayer is essential to any life of faith. Below are some prayer disciplines that are essential in discernment.
- **Holy Hour** – Learn to spend time with our Lord in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament whether it is weekly or daily. In a Holy Hour we are like the beloved

disciple resting on the chest of Christ – our hearts are inclined toward him and his Sacred Heart is inclined toward us.

- **Scripture** – Sacred Scripture is the inspired word of God when we meditate on it reflectively we encounter Christ the Risen Lord. Specifically spend time reflecting on the call scenes found throughout Scripture in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Watch how God calls different people and even note how they respond.
- **Liturgy of the Hours** (Morning and Evening Prayer) – Praying the Liturgy of the Hours is a responsibility of the priest, deacon and religious but it is encouraged of all members of the Church. It is good to bracket the day in prayer. Learning the Liturgy of the Hours on one's own can be confusing and daunting at first – you may need assistance. A good “first step” into the Liturgy of the Hours is to first make use of a resource like the monthly periodical “*Magnificat*” or something similar.
- **Daily Examen** – This is a great prayer tradition of the Church. St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit tradition is a great resource here. Take some time at the end of each day to reflect on how God has been present and how you have responded or not responded to that presence. (*You can do this through Lectio Divina as well.*)
- **Rosary** – Spend time reflecting with Mary, the Mother of God, on the salvific events in the life of her son.
- **Eucharist** – The Mass is the “source and summit” of the Christian life. Try to develop (as your schedule allows) the discipline of daily Mass attendance and enter prayerfully into the celebration.
- **Confession** – We are all sinners and one of the most corrosive aspects of sin is to lead us into doubt and despair. The sacrament of reconciliation is needed medicine for our souls that strengthens our ability to trust in the call of Christ.
- **Community** – Be involved in your local Church community ... We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ; the Holy Spirit is present in the life of the Christian community so get involved. Vocations come forth from the Body of Christ and not separated from it. Also, priests, religious and deacons are called to be ministers of community.
- **Mary and the Saints** – One of the most beautiful aspects of the Catholic Faith is our very real communion with the saints. Read and learn about the saints (their lives are a source of great instruction and encouragement) but also develop a relationship with the saints, especially Mary. The saints are our friends and they yearn for us to know the fullness of joy that they experience.
- **Service to the Poor** – When the Son of God came into this world he was born in a poor manger. Christ continues to be “born” in the presence of the poor of our world. If we are faithful in our service of our poor brothers and sisters, we will see the face of Christ and he will speak to the needs of our hearts.
- **Fast** – Fasting is not just for Lent anymore. Develop the discipline of fasting in your life whether it be from food, entertainment, even the internet and social media. When we fast we open up a space for God to enter.
- **Discernment Group** – It is good to know that we are not alone in considering the thought of a life as a priest, religious or deacon. This is the value of the *Institute for Diaconal Studies' deacon formation program* ... as well as visits to religious communities and seminaries. There are others who are asking the same questions and wrestling with the same possibilities in their life. Knowing this is an aid in our own discernment.

- **Spiritual direction** – Seek out a spiritual director – a priest (*required for aspirants and candidates*), religious, deacon or trained lay person. A good spiritual director will walk with us, help us discern and provide us with objective input. Normally, a person meets with a spiritual director once a month.

Discernment is an aspect of any true life of faith. Through discernment we come to know the amazing truth that God is indeed involved in our lives and that God wants nothing but the best for us

## **Around IDS**

### *Fall Semester Courses*

- Old Testament (Year 1)
- Church History (Year 1)
- Presiding at the Rites I (Year 2)
- Sacramental Theology (Year 2)
- Homiletics IV (Year 3)
- Canon Law (Year 3)

### *September Formation Sessions*

- Sept. 17 – Introduction to Spirituality (Aspirancy Path)  
Wives' Day of Recollection (Aspirancy Path – Key Event)  
Worship I: Introduction to Ritual & Music (Year 1)  
Presiding at the Rites I practicum (Year 2)
- Sept. 24 – Worship II: Liturgical Leadership through Music & Chant (Year 1)  
Pastoral Concerns of Marriage Prep & Marriage Prep Certification (Year 3)
- Sept. 29 – Candidacy Evening of Reflection (Year 1)

### **IDS September Birthdays**

Prayers for a special blessing on these folks who celebrate birthdays during the summer months: 9/2 - Sarah Huie; 9/4 - Peter Brown; 9/5 - Cornelius Johnson; 9/13 - Allen Origenes; 9/13 - Silvia Tejada; 9/23 - Joanna Fisher; 9/25 - Curt Robey; 9/25 - Gene Kummerer, Jr.; 9/28 - Kate Baker; 9/30 - Catherine O'Hearn

### **Let Us Remember in Prayer Those Entrusted to Our Care**

*Pray in a particular way for all of our sick:* Deacon Jim Cozzo; Catherine O'Hearn; Marites Negron; Cassie Bertke

*Pray for our beloved who have passed from this life to the next:* Rita Farina; Loretta Greco; Colleen Eble; Sr. Eleanor (Villa Santa Maria); Fr. Tomasz Dzida, SChr