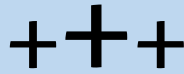


The PeliDeacon

*a newsletter about deacons
in The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana*



Vol. 2023, No. 6
May 8, 2023

What Are Deacons Doing?

I'm often asked, "What are Louisiana's deacons doing?" The quick answer is, "a lot of things." Among the ordained clerical orders, deacons serve in a remarkably wide variety of ministries. In our diocese alone, deacons work with at-risk youngsters, homeless folks, patients in addiction-treatment facilities, prison inmates, and law enforcement officers on patrol, to name only a few. This issue will feature the work of one deacon, a financial consultant by day, and by night a law enforcement chaplain with the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department. This issue also offers lots of other answers to that question, "What are deacons doing?" **The Ven. Charles deGravelles, Archdeacon**

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An Easter Season Message from Our Bishop

Dear friends,

What a joy it was to celebrate and preach at the Cathedral on Easter Day. And, as we move deeper into this Easter season and towards Pentecost, I wanted to share some excerpts of that sermon with you. Know of my deep gratitude for your faithful ministry in this diocese and for my joy in sharing this journey with you as your bishop.

Like many of you, I was glued to my television to watch the finals of the NCAA Women's Championship game. It was pure magic. As an athlete and former basketball player, I could feel, even through my television screen, that the energy on that court was in LSU's favor. They arrived playing to win. Despite the frequent interruption of the whistle, the women never lost their edge. They were red hot. The most impressive for me being Jasmine Carson, a 2nd string guard transfer student who found herself in a position she could only dream of. Coming into the game as several key starters were benched for foul trouble, Jasmine shot 7 for 7, with 5 of those shots coming from behind the 3-point line.

At the half, after sinking a buzzer-beater, Jasmine was interviewed by the court-side reporter. And, what she said, made me stop the game, rewind, and listen again. She said this, "I have been working for this my whole life."

Yes, it's a simple statement, but it resonated deeply with me. "I have been working for this my whole life." Immediately, I had an image of this young woman. I thought of her in the gym day after day. Preparation for this stage stretches beyond scheduled practices and season games. It comes through taking the extra step, doing just a little bit more. I am quite certain that she showed up to the gym when no one else was there and when no one else was looking. She put in just that little bit extra. She was good...but her star was of the long-burning type. She knew her role: To be ready to answer the call. She surely did that.

What a lesson for us this Easter Sunday. What if we approach Easter not as a day...and not even as limited by the 50 days of the Easter season between now and Pentecost. But rather something that God has been working out in us our whole life? Easter as a truth so deeply engrained in our being that we not only practice resurrection in this yearly celebration, but it is also embodied in us. That the moment of Christ conquering death is actually reflective of countless other times that we have been the recipients of his saving grace...a reflection of the

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long trajectory of the constancy of Christ in our lives?

This reading from John, more so than any of the other resurrection narratives, reminds us that when we walk out those doors, we don't leave Easter behind. The love of the cross and an empty tomb is fully contained in the love of Jesus...and this love is experienced over and over in our lives. It's personal. What is lasting...what will feed us in the long days in between this moment and the next...is that each of us brings to the table our unique relationship with Jesus. The good, the bad, the ups and the downs...all right here. My friends, take heart. Take heart when the world seems dim and uncertain. Take heart in the constancy of being known as children of God. Jesus knows each of us by name and calls us in exactly the way that we are prepared to hear it. And, when we do...and oh we will...we too will know that God has been working in us too...for our whole lives...and in ways far greater than we could ask for our imagine.

The Rt. Rev. Shannon Rogers Duckworth
Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana

Serving those who Protect and Serve: A Profile of Deacon Mark Hudson

Twice per month, Deacon Mark Hudson arrives at the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department Headquarters by 6 pm. After greeting officers who are about to leave on night shift patrols, he quietly leads them in prayer. Mark then dons a bullet-proof jacket labelled "Chaplain" and joins one of those officers to patrol the streets of the parish in a squad car for the next six to seven hours, responding as needed to problems large and small.

A native of New Orleans and a "cradle Episcopalian," Mark Hudson earned a BS in Industrial Management from Southeastern, an MBA from Tulane, and a Masters in Pastoral Studies from Loyola. He has had a long and successful career as a certified financial advisor, using his financial expertise many times over the years in the service of the diocese and individual churches.



Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Chaplain,
Deacon Mark Hudson.

Mark is one of two deacons in the Diocese of Louisiana doing law enforcement chaplaincy. The other is Deacon Mike Hackett.

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Serving Those Who Protect and Serve

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Deputy Rodney Robinson and Deacon Mark Hudson about to leave to patrol Jefferson Parish streets.

Mark entered discernment for Holy Orders in 2002 and was ordained Deacon in 2007. His diaconal ministries over the years have included directing the St. James Spirituality Center in Baton Rouge, as a Stephen Minister assisting in several parishes, as a prison minister with the Episcopal Chapel of the Transfiguration at Angola, and as a Chaplain to Bishop Morris Thompson, traveling with him on episcopal visits to churches in the diocese. Currently, Mark is leading worship at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Bogalusa and working as a volunteer chaplain for the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department.

“You never know what a night is going to look like,” Mark says, “but usually the majority of issues we’ll handle are fairly small with only three to four situations that are significant.” A

“significant” situation might be a serious auto accident, a shooting or a domestic violence incident. Mark not only provides moral support for the officers but also brings his pastoral skills to distraught people affected by these incidents and to other first responders.

Another of Mark's duties as a law enforcement chaplain is to be on call for a 24-hour period once every month. Mark tells the story of going to a home where a man suffered a fatal heart attack. Mark ministered to the family and then, a few days later, stopped by to check on them. “I was surprised but deeply gratified,” he says, “when the family asked me to do the funeral.”

Mark has had extensive training to be a law enforcement chaplain. “Our initial training is 50 hours, but we have to meet minimum continuing education requirements every year.”

Of the many ministries he has done over the years, Mark finds law enforcement chaplaincy to be the most satisfying. “God utilizes everything I've learned,” he says. “It can be very demanding but I've found that the skills I've picked up in my other ministries somehow all come into play.”

Solomon Episcopal Conference Center
30th Anniversary Celebration
April 29, 2023



Bishop Duckworth celebrates the Holy Eucharist with assistance from Deacons Cindy Obier, Chaplain, and Charles deGravelles, Deacon of the Mass. Father John Pitzer preached a powerful sermon to a large crowd of Episcopalians from across the Diocese.



Photos by The Very Rev. Tommy Dillon

Utilizing Deacons in Disasters

By Deacon Elaine Clements

Deacon Elaine Clements, long-time Disaster Coordinator for the Diocese of Louisiana, is now retired and living in Alabama but continues to serve on the diocesan Council on Deacons.

An integral component of all disaster preparedness is determining assets. For example, often churches have the gift of space that is largely unused during the week; they may have large

The Diocese of Louisiana has another very important asset when responding to disasters--deacons.

Deacons are uniquely situated to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable after a disaster.

numbers of retired folks with free time on their hands or parishioners with particular expertise or equipment (think "chain saws") that can be used when responding to the needs of a community after a disaster. There may be existing outreach programs which, with a little enhancement, can quickly function as an initial way to provide relief.

The Diocese of Louisiana has another very important asset when responding to disasters--deacons. Deacons are uniquely situated to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable after a disaster. Deacons in the Diocese of

Louisiana frequently have extensive networks in the community and vast experience in disaster response, stemming from Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and extending through many other catastrophic events. Outreach ministries that have been developed, often with the leadership of deacons, make excellent vehicles for forming the networks and relationships that can enable quick and appropriate response after an event.

Deacons, with their emphasis on the needs of the world, are able to quickly bring those needs to the attention of the church, especially where they have been involved in outreach to vulnerable populations prior to the disaster. They also may be well acquainted with parishioners who have a "heart" for this kind of work and are willingly mobilized to help.

In my experience nationally with the Domestic Disaster Program for Episcopal Relief & Development, often our first point of contact (well, after calling the local Bishop) would be a well-situated Deacon, someone who had been doing outreach in the area affected by the disaster and knew exactly where hurting populations of folks could be found and what they might need. Louisiana is incredibly lucky to have such deacons.



Deacon Saints and Heroes



Saint Olympia the Deaconess



St. Olympia the Deaconess was born around the year 362 AD into a wealthy, aristocratic pagan family in the imperial city of Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great. When her parents died, she was raised and nurtured in the Christian faith by an uncle. Widowed at an early age, Olympia chose to devote her life solely to God and became close friends of both St. Gregory the Theologian, Bishop of Nyssa, and St. John Chrysostom.

St. Olympia, known for her generosity and purity of spirit, ministered to the necessities of the sick and poor, and supported the work of the Church in Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria with such lavish donations, not only of her money but of her land, that even Chrysostom, who might be called the great preacher of almsgiving, warned her against

indiscriminate liberality, reminding her that as her wealth was a trust committed to her by God, she ought to be discreet in the management of it.

Highly educated and well grounded in the Scriptures, Olympia placed her services at the disposal of Archbishop Nektarios who so valued her charitable generosity, and found her advice on church affairs so helpful, that he ordained her a deaconess when she was still in her early thirties.

Olympia was of such renown that a Life of her was written by an anonymous author shortly after her repose in the Lord in 408 AD. Another Life of her was written by a later abbess of her monastery, named Sergia, in the 7th century. She is also mentioned in Palladius's famous Lausiatic History and Sozomen's Ecclesiastical History.

From St. Olympia Orthodox Church, Diocese of New York and New Jersey



Prayer of St. Olympia the Deaconess

Heavenly Father, You inspired St. Olympias to strive for perfect charity and so attain Your Kingdom at the end of her pilgrimage on earth. Strengthen us through her example that we may advance, rejoicing in the way of love. Amen.

DEACON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 3-Conference on Deacons, St. Luke's and St. Anna's New Orleans

June 9-10—ECW Annual Gathering

June 10– Gay Pride Parade, New Orleans

June 17, 9am-3pm—Dismantling Racism Training, Trinity NO

June 29, 6 pm—Battle of Clergy Bands, Trinity Baton Rouge

July 8, 10am-4pm—Invite, Welcome, Connect Workshop

St. Michael's Mandeville (also available on Zoom)

Safe Church Minister Training:

Jul 20, 1-2:30, St. Margaret's Baton Rouge

Jul 24, 1-2:30 pm—via Zoom

Jul 25, 6-7:30 pm—St. George's New Orleans

Jul 27, 6-7:30 pm—via Zoom

Aug 4-6—Addictions Recovery Retreat, SECC, In-person, Zoom

Aug 24, 10am-4pm—Clergy Day, SECC

Spring Deacon Conference

Saturday, June 3, 2023, New Orleans

The Life and Living Legacy of Francis Joseph-Gaudet

9—11 am —St. Luke's New Orleans

11:30 am —1:00 pm—Lunch

1:30 pm — 3:30 pm—St. Anna's New Orleans

Details to be announced

Council on Deacons

Bishop Shannon Duckworth
Archdeacon Charles deGravelles
Deacon Jay Albert
Deacon Elaine Clements
Deacon JoAnn Garma
Deacon Michael Hackett
Deacon Mark Hudson
Deacon Charmaine Kathmann
Deacon Cindy Obier
Deacon Debbie Scalia
Deacon Carol Spencer



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*a newsletter for and about the deacons
of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana*

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Our Vision: The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana is one church, faithful to our Lord Jesus, united in mission, reaching out through service and proclamation to all for whom Christ died. We live in joyous expectation of God's transforming power, compassion, and mercy in our lives.

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