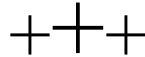


# The PeliDeacon

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

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January 13, 2023



## Take-Aways from the Clergy Conference

For those who missed it, the clergy conference this week was remarkable, the most energizing, collegial, and inspiring in my memory. Deacons were well represented in every aspect of the three-day conference, including the liturgy. Thanks to the presenters, our diocesan staff, the SECC folks, and all who made it wonderful.



Photo by Rev. Tommy Dillon



Photo by Rev. Tommy Dillon

## Bishop's Message to Deacons

In her time with deacons at the clergy conference, Bishop Shannon highlighted two issues that are on her mind.

One is the current revamping of the Gaudet Fund to maximize its effectiveness, and also ways to put the spotlight on the woman after whom the fund is named: **Frances Joseph-Gaudet** (1861-1934) an educator, social worker and prison reformer who lived and worked in New Orleans and who is honored as a saint in the Episcopal Church. Here is some good basic information on this remarkable Louisiana saint: ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances\\_Joseph-Gaudet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Joseph-Gaudet)).

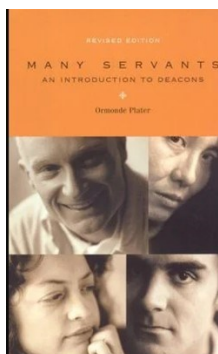
Bishop Shannon also talked about the need to strengthen our **emergency preparedness and response** in the diocese. She asked deacons to think about how we might help. Let's be prayerfully considering how we, as deacons, can respond to the Bishop's requests.

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## Deacon Conferences 2023

Here are a couple of ideas that some of us discussed at the end of the conference.

Let's consider having our next deacon conference at St. Luke's New Orleans and make the life and work of Frances Joseph-Gaudet the central theme. We have deacons active in prison ministry, justice reform, work with at-risk youth, and addictions recovery, all Gaudet ministries. Mother Jane-Allison Wiggin has offered to facilitate any groups who would like to visit and know more about Joseph-Gaudet.



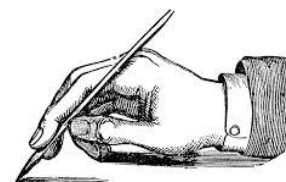
Let's consider having our second conference of the year at St. John's Thibodeaux. Many of us have long wanted to honor and celebrate the life and legacy of "the father of Louisiana deacons," Ormonde Plater, a diaconal and liturgical scholar, and a central figure in the emergence of the diaconate as a separate and equal clerical order. Thibodeaux was Plater's hometown, and his brother, David, a historian, is still an active member at St. John's.

Celebrating the life and legacy of Ormonde Plater would help us highlight the liturgical role of deacons in the liturgy. Also, Thibodeaux would be a perfect place for us to consider the Bishop's second request: the need to strengthen our emergency preparedness and response in the diocese. We are blessed to have two deacons among us with extensive resumes in this area: Elaine Clements and Carol Spencer.

I'll be scheduling a Zoom Council on Deacons meeting soon to consider these ideas, so please prayerfully consider them.

### A Deacon's Story

#### *A Continuing Series about the Deacons of Louisiana*



All Louisiana deacons are encouraged to write and submit a story about a time in their ministry in which they felt .

Our first in a series by and about Louisiana Deacons is by **Deacon Jay Albert** (next page).

# Leading a Congregation into Outreach



Deacon Jay Albert at Interfaith Prayer Service for the Homeless

by Deacon Jay Albert

While serving at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Lakeview, New Orleans, as my first assignment, I looked for an outreach program that would involve the laity. I wanted a program that they could get behind and that was centered on their commitment to serve the marginalized.

While at a deacon's conference at Solomon Center, Deacon Priscilla Maumus invited a Sr. Vera Butler, who served at the Lateran Light Ministry in New Orleans to speak. Sr. Vera gave a brief history of how they came to New Orleans from New York after Katrina to help feed the poor living on the streets in New Orleans.

I called Sr. Vera and asked how I could help with this ministry. She invited me to come help with the food distribution one day. I arrived at 11:30 in the morning and she gave me a brief tour of the modest facility and explained how this feeding works each day. Volunteers are assigned for each weekday to bring food, usually sandwiches prepared in a prescribed way, to be placed in bags with chips, snacks, and a napkin and then put on large trays to be distributed at the appropriate time.

I assisted with amazement at how they fed 175 people a bag lunch, a cup of tea or water, and a delicious pastry which was donated each day from local bakeries. This all happened within 20 minutes. Almost every person that stood in line to receive food, thanked and blessed each one of us for helping feed them that day.

I knew this would be the ministry that would work for our church. With exuberance I returned to church and spoke with many parishioners about this ministry. I explained that we would get one day a month assigned to our parish to provide sandwiches for lunch and during announcements the week before, I explained the ministry and ask anyone who can to buy a loaf of bread and make sandwiches and bring them to the church the morning of our assigned day. I asked them to invite their children to help and invite their neighbors to assist as they can with this.

The first day came and we had almost 300 sandwiches at the church and about 6 people who wanted to come help distribute them. I was so excited. We got there early and while the parishioners assembled the bags of food and cups of drink,

I mingled in the courtyard with the clients who were waiting to get some food. At first the clients just looked at me wearing a collar and walking around and didn't say much. I approached some with greetings and tried to engage in some conversation. Slowly a few opened up about how they were shunned at a

church somewhere or asked to leave when they were asking for some help or food.

I realized they had had some bad experiences with churches and apologized for that and offered some consolation as best I could. After a little more time, some asked me if I could help them find a job, some asked for a prayer that they could get a job and get off the street and go back to supporting themselves and their families. I was so touched.

Not one asked for a handout, only a way off the streets. I went inside to help distribute the food. I watched the people coming up to the distribution window, they were people of all walks of life including a few women with children. They were all grateful and their faces said it all. The clients sat in the courtyard and ate their lunches and left to return to the streets. This whole process took place in a 2-hour time frame and we too went back to our lives.

After that first trip from our church, the people who participated all wanted to come back each month and as others heard about it, they too wanted to join us. We could only bring about 8-10 people due to the space limitations and so I had to rotate volunteers so that others could also get to help with this ministry.

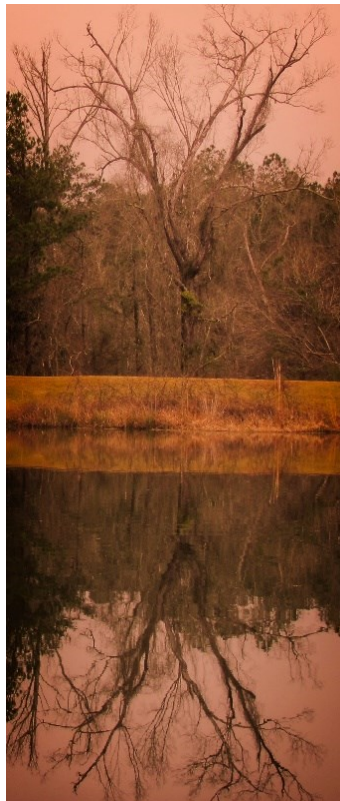
I am no longer assigned to that parish, but that ministry went on for many years after I left. This was one of the precious opportunities that God allowed me to be a part of and I am forever grateful for it.

## A Message from Archdeacon Charlie

To the right is a photo I made during my lake-side prayer time at the Clergy Conference on Wednesday morning. I call it “What Goes Up...”

For me, the old saying “What goes up must come down” describes the work of a deacon. We ascend Mount Transfiguration with the LORD to be transformed and inspired so that we may come down to bring the LORD’s healing into the world’s places of need.

The Ven. Charles deGravelles



What Goes Up... by Charles deGravelles



## Please Join AED

If you are not already a member of the Association of Episcopal Deacons, please join. A strengthened relationship with Episcopal deacons in other dioceses will help to deepen and enrich our own ministries.

Here’s where you can join:

[https://  
www.episcopaldeacons.org/  
join---aed-membership.html](https://www.episcopaldeacons.org/join---aed-membership.html)