

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



Memo

Date: September 18, 2025

To: Deacons

From: Deacon Dennis Dorner, chancellor and director of Permanent Diaconate and Penny Simmons, co-director of Diaconate Formation; Office of the Permanent Diaconate

Re: Continuing formation opportunity for deacons

You are invited to a day of reflection for deacons and wives on **Ministry of Presence to the Incarcerated, Immigrant and Refugee**.

There are many moments in Scripture that explicitly instruct us to care for those who are imprisoned, and for immigrants and refugees (indeed, there are several hundred passages in which care for “foreigners” is enjoined). Our modern society does little to care for these groups and focuses instead on dehumanizing them.

The goal of ministry for people who are incarcerated and for immigrants and refugees, therefore, must be twofold: to be present for those whom society has thrown away, and to work for justice that will guarantee respect for their human dignity. This workshop will include a practical guide for engaging in prison and jail ministry, as well as formation in immigration and refugee ministry and restorative justice.

Our presenters are Chaplain Thomas Jahr, regional chaplaincy services coordinator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons; Imelda Richárd, coordinator of prison ministry, and Jayna Hoffacker, director of restorative justice ministry. Bishop Bernard E. Shlesinger III will also join us.

While this workshop is for all who have been ordained and their wives, there is a very specific requirement for those recently ordained.

The National Directory for Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons second edition provides that **a post-ordination formation program be established for the first five years after ordination**. If you have been

ordained **in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 or 2025**, you are required to attend the workshop. Please let us be clear, this is not optional.

When programs are being offered by the archdiocese the men ordained in the previously noted years **MUST** attend these sessions unless there is a very valid, and approved excuse.

Join us on **Saturday, October 11**, beginning with morning prayer at 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Time will be allocated for reflections, discussion and to answer questions that arise from the presentations.

The event will take place in Grand Hall B & C at the Chancery, 2401 Lake Park Drive SE, Smyrna, GA 30080.

You may claim six continuing education hours in your annual report by attending the session. Be sure to note your wife's attendance on the registration form. Lunch and drinks will be provided.

Register at: [10-11-2025 Post Ordination Workshop Registration](#) before **Wednesday, October 1**. Follow up emails will be sent to the email you enter, so please be sure that your email is correct when you register.

We are looking forward to seeing each of you once again.