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Diocese ordains 10 permanent deacons

CHINO HILLS – Even a global pandemic couldn't stop another large class of permanent deacons ordained in the Diocese of San Bernardino.

On consecutive weekends, Aug. 22 and 29, ten men became permanent deacons during four different Ordination Masses held at three different parishes. The new deacons are Mario Aguiar, Baltazar Aguirre, Leonardo Bautista, Raul Michel, Juan Lombera, Enrique Vazquez, Jorge Briones, John Duffy, Jose Trinidad Porras, and Martin Sullivan.

Current health and safety guidelines required by the Diocese meant that there were multiple Masses with fewer in attendance. The Ordinations were held outdoors at Our Lady of Soledad Parish in Coachella, St. Christopher Parish in Moreno Valley and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Chino Hills. Six-foot social distancing was maintained, masks were worn by attendees. Bishop Gerald Barnes wore a face shield throughout the Ordination Masses he celebrated.

"It's a difficult year," he acknowledged during his homily at St. Paul the Apostle on Aug. 29. "There are people living with such anxiety and such uncertainty that they're lost.

"And then we have this beautiful day. The Lord is saying, 'I haven't forgotten you. I'm calling forth from your families two to receive the diaconate.'"

Deacon John Duffy said his participation in adult faith formation programs offered by the Diocese, including the Catholic Bible Institute and Continuing Ministry Formation Program (CMFP) sparked his interest in becoming a deacon.

"I was looking to serve the Church in a greater way," said Duffy, who, along with his wife, Teresita, heads St. Paul's ministry to the sick and homebound, which has taken on greater meaning during the pandemic. "Not only are we bringing God's presence in the Holy Eucharist, but being that face of Jesus to them, I find that very rewarding."

As clergy, deacons' duties include proclaiming the Gospel, giving homilies at Mass, administering some Sacraments (baptisms, weddings), and performing acts of charity.

Following their Ordination, the deacons' assignments were announced.

Deacon Duffy (St. Paul the Apostle), Deacon Briones (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Chino), Deacon Aguiar (St. Louis, Cathedral City), Deacon Aguirre (Our Lady of Soledad, Coachella), Deacon Bautista (St. Christopher, Moreno Valley), Deacon Lombera (Our Lady of Soledad, Coachella), Deacon Vazquez (Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine, Riverside), Deacon Michel (St. Thomas the Apostle, Riverside), Deacon Sullivan (Our Lady of Soledad, Coachella), and Deacon Porras (Our Lady of Soledad, Coachella).

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