

CONFERENCE '26

Diocese of Gary
Offices of Worship and Intercultural Ministry



From One Generation to the Next: Faithful To The Call
De Una Generación a la Siguiente: Fieles Al Llamado

Training and Renewal for
Lectors • EMHCs • OCIA
Ministers of Care • Music Ministers
Art & Environment • Hospitality/Greeters • Sacristans

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November 6-7

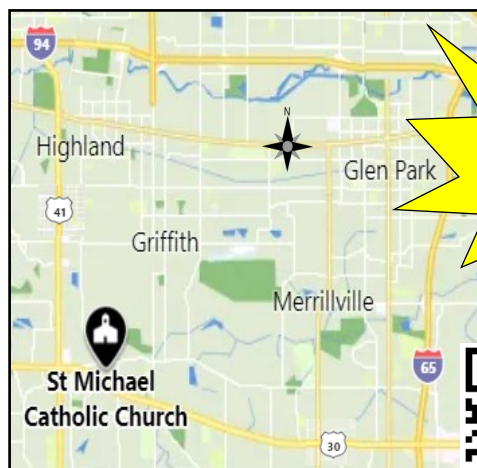
November 5 - Pre-Conference Evening of Praise & Adoration

St. Michael the Archangel Parish • 1 E. Wilhelm Street • Schererville, IN 46375



DIOCESE OF GARY
Offices of Worship and Intercultural Ministry

CONFERENCE '26
9292 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410



Directions to St. Michael Parish, Schererville:

Take I-94 to Rte. 41 South (Indianapolis Blvd),
Take Rte. 41 South to Rte. 30 East. Approximately
1/2 mile, St. Michael Parish is the left (north).

Take I-65 to Rte. 30 West (West Lincoln Hwy),
Take Rte. 30 West approximately 7 miles.
St. Michael Parish is the right (north).



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MINISTRY!**

**¡POR FAVOR
COMPARTAN
CON PERSONAS
SIRVIENDO EN
ALGÚN
MINISTERIO
LITÚRGICO!**

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

**6:00p Pre-Conference Evening of
Praise & Adoration**
Rev. Ivan Alatorre, Reflection

*Specially Invite
Young Adults!*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

5:30p Registration Opens

6:30p Welcome & KEYNOTE:
REV. MARTY DOBRZYNSKI

**NIGHT PRAYER WITH
SERVICE OF LIGHT**
(Lucernarium)

Fellowship

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

7:00a Registration, Exhibits/Vendors

8:00a Morning Weekday Mass
Bishop McClory,
[*optional*]

9:00a Coffee and Rolls
Exhibits/Vendors

**10:00a RENEWAL / TRAINING
SESSIONS**

11:45a Lunch
(included in registration)

**12:30p RENEWAL / TRAINING
SESSIONS**

2:15p Evaluations

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT: FAITHFUL TO THE CALL

The Future. We often think of this as something we will build. The philosophy of our age also reassures us that we will build a future better and different from the past. Yet in reality, as people of faith, you and I know that the future belongs to God, our loving Creator, secured for our benefit by his Son, and powered by the Holy Spirit. This means we don't build our future, but we grow into God's future – one that does not harbor "haves" or "have nots." We are reminded that there have been people before us who brought us into the flow of God's history, God's River of Faith. We too must mentor people into that flow as well so that, from one generation to the next, we remain faithful to the call.

This River of Faith, that we have been brought into, needs continual renewal and training. Training in the way of the Cross and renewal in discipleship. Participation in ministry in the Church is a challenge and a blessing. Like the cross, it is a constant reminder that as we pour ourselves out for others we must be willing to give up our personal schedules to be of service to the Body of Christ. This requires our openness to constant renewal in the hope of a new life in Jesus who, by giving the Holy Spirit, gives us the gifts we need to carry out our various ministries.

The purpose of CONFERENCE '86 through CONFERENCE '26 has been to provide liturgical lay ministers and clergy with a opportunity to both encourage their renewal and to continually train those entering liturgical ministry. Both help liturgical ministers to embrace the challenge of self giving, the blessings of the Cross embraced in love for the Body of Christ. Encouraging our younger brothers and sisters, those from 16 to 30 years old, to enter this river of faith that carries us into God's future is essential, because the river of the world has a strong current that leads to a drain of energy, love and trust.

CONFERENCE, like other efforts, is here to connect both younger and experienced members of Christ's Body to jump into God's river of grace and mercy and be grafted to Jesus so when they minister in His name, their service becomes Jesus' for others. This is our participation in the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus. And this is what fuels the world, indeed, the universe: as our future – God's future runs to meet us like the forgiving Father, in Luke's gospel, running to meet his wayward son/daughter with robe and ring and festive banquet.

As CONFERENCE '26 marks 40 years of renewal and training the challenge of inviting others to minister in Jesus' name is still fresh. Let each liturgical lay minister take on the responsibility of inviting our younger brothers and sisters to join us in the flow of God's river of Faith. You were once invited, now it is time to work at inviting others. Is this not the call of discipleship? Thus, from one generation to the next we remain faithful to the Call, allowing Jesus to work through us.

In this special anniversary year, on Thursday evening, we have an opportunity to enter into praise and adoration even before we start our official gathering.

Praise and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament are the soul's natural response to a God who cannot be outdone in generosity. When reflecting on the eternal Father's greatest gift – His Son, Jesus Christ – and the deeply humbling call to ministry, it becomes clear that we are overwhelmingly blessed. Ultimately, adoration is the realization that we have nothing of our own to offer that could ever match God's boundless goodness; a gift of praise and a life poured out in service are simply the only worthy things left to give back in return.

It is precisely from this intimate time of reflection that true ministry flows. We do not serve out of our own empty reserves, but rather as extensions of the love, grace, and strength received at the foot of the altar, transforming our adoration into active, living service for God's people.



DE UNA GENERACION A LA SIGUIENTE: FIELES AL LLAMADO

El futuro. A menudo pensamos en él como algo que nosotros construiremos. La filosofía de nuestra época también nos asegura que edificaremos un futuro mejor y distinto al pasado. Sin embargo, en realidad, como personas de fe, usted y yo sabemos que el futuro pertenece a Dios, nuestro amoroso Creador, que está asegurado para nuestro bien por su Hijo y sostenido por el Espíritu Santo. Esto significa que no construimos nuestro futuro, sino que crecemos hacia el futuro de Dios – uno en el que no existen los que «tienen» frente a los que «no tienen». Se nos recuerda que hubo personas antes que nosotros que nos introdujeron en el curso de la historia de Dios, en el Río de la Fe de Dios. Nosotros también debemos guiar a otros hacia esa corriente para que, de una generación a la siguiente, permaneceremos fieles al llamado.

Este río de fe en el que hemos sido introducidos requiere una renovación y una formación continuas: formación en el camino de la Cruz y renovación en el discipulado. Participar en el ministerio de la Iglesia es tanto un desafío como una bendición. Al igual que la cruz, es un recordatorio constante de que, al entregarnos a los demás, debemos estar dispuestos a dejar de lado nuestros propios planes para servir al Cuerpo de Cristo. Esto exige que estemos abiertos a una renovación constante, con la esperanza de una vida nueva en Jesús, quien, al darnos el Espíritu Santo, nos otorga los dones necesarios para desempeñar nuestros diversos ministerios.

El propósito de las CONFERENCIAS, desde la de 1986 hasta la de 2026, ha sido brindar a los ministros laicos y al clero la oportunidad de fomentar su propia renovación y de capacitar continuamente a quienes se inician en el ministerio litúrgico. Ambas iniciativas ayudan a los ministros a asumir el desafío de la entrega de sí mismos y a abrazar, con amor por el Cuerpo de Cristo, las bendiciones de la Cruz. Es fundamental alentar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas más jóvenes – aquellos de entre 16 y 30 años – a adentrarse en este río de fe que nos conduce hacia el futuro de Dios, pues la corriente del mundo es poderosa y tiende a agotar la energía, el amor y la confianza.

La CONFERENCIA, al igual que otras iniciativas, busca conectar a los miembros, tanto jóvenes como experimentados, del Cuerpo de Cristo para que se sumerjan en el río de gracia y misericordia de Dios y se injerten en Jesús; así, al ministrar en su nombre, su servicio se convierte en el servicio de Jesús hacia los demás. Esta es nuestra participación en el misterio de la Encarnación de Jesús. Y esto es lo que impulsa al mundo y, de hecho, al universo: nuestro futuro – el futuro de Dios – corre a nuestro encuentro tal como el Padre misericordioso del Evangelio de Lucas corre al encuentro de su hijo o hija que se había extraviado, trayendo consigo el manto, el anillo y el banquete festivo.

Mientras la CONFERENCIA '26 marca 40 años de renovación y formación, sigue vigente el desafío de invitar a otros a servir en el nombre de Jesús. Que cada ministro laico litúrgico asuma la responsabilidad de invitar a nuestros hermanos y hermanas más jóvenes a unirse a nosotros en el fluir del río de fe de Dios. Ustedes fueron invitados en su momento; ahora es el momento de trabajar para invitar a otros. ¿Acaso no es esta la llamada del discipulado? Así, de una generación a otra, permanecemos fieles a la Llamada, permitiendo que Jesús actúe a través de nosotros.

En este año especial de aniversario, el jueves por la tarde tendremos la oportunidad de entrar en alabanza y adoración incluso antes de comenzar nuestra reunión oficial.

La alabanza y la adoración ante el Santísimo Sacramento son la respuesta natural del alma a un Dios cuya generosidad no tiene igual. Al reflexionar sobre el don más grande del Padre Eterno – su Hijo, Jesucristo – y sobre la llamada al ministerio, que nos llena de humildad, resulta evidente que hemos sido inmensamente bendecidos. En última instancia, la adoración es reconocer que no tenemos nada propio que ofrecer que pueda equipararse a la bondad infinita de Dios; la ofrenda de alabanza y una vida entregada al servicio son, sencillamente, lo único digno que podemos devolverle.

Precisamente de este tiempo íntimo de reflexión es de donde brota el verdadero ministerio. No servimos desde nuestras propias reservas vacías, sino como prolongación del amor, la gracia y la fortaleza recibidos al pie del altar, transformando así nuestra adoración en un servicio activo y vivo para el pueblo de Dios.

EL HORARIO DE LA CONFERENCIA

JUEVES, 5 DE NOVIEMBRE

6:00p Previa a la Conferencia
Velada de Alabanza y Adoración
Padre Ivan Alatorre, Reflexión

*Invitación Especial
a Jóvenes Adultos!*

VIERNES, 6 DE NOVIEMBRE

5:30p Se Abren las Inscripciones

6:30p Bienvenida y
CONFERENCIA MAGISTRAL
DR. OSCAR CASTELLANOS

ORACIÓN DE LA NOCHE
CON SERVICIO DE LUZ
(Lucernario)

Convivio

SÁBADO, 7 DE NOVIEMBRE

7:00a Inscripciones,
Exposiciones / Vendedores

8:00a Misa Matutina Entre Semana
Obispo McClory
[*opcional*]

9:00a Café y Pan Dulce
Exposiciones / Vendedores

10:00a SESIONES DE RENOVACIÓN
/ENTRENAMIENTO

11:45a Almuerzo
(incluido en la inscripción)

12:30p SESIONES DE RENOVACIÓN
/ENTRENAMIENTO

2:15p Evaluaciones



KEYNOTE PRESENTER

REV. MARTIN J. DOBRZYNSKI, MA, M.DIV

Last October the CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE APOSTOLATE (CARA) reported that the number of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Candidates has dropped from a high in 2016 of 24,000 candidates to 5,000 in 2025. In addition, the number of actual graduations from Lay Ecclesial Ministry Programs fell from 11,500 in 2014 to 2,000 in 2024-2025. The number of confirmed Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation Programs has fallen from nearly 500 in 2005 to 134 programs in 2025.

The trend of declining numbers of lay ecclesial ministers, of which liturgical lay ministry is a part, can certainly be seen as troubling. But, it can also redirect our efforts to take into account the powerful forces at work in our society that devalue human connections which create understanding softening the tribal boundaries that have led to painful divisions in our families, communities, our nation, and the world.

Yet, at the same time we begin to see a conversion taking place in the hearts of many seeking the Lord Jesus. Intelligence alone does not grab a person's heart and lead them to fall in love with Jesus. Nor does it move a person to give of their time and talent to be Jesus for another in the work of ministry. Let us seize this moment in our journey to confront the underlying presumptions that place a quest for pure intelligence over the real human quest for understanding. A quest no creation of our own making can achieve. The myth of the "tower," that will make a name for ourselves, must be understood and redirected for the true fulfillment of our human destiny.

***FR. MARTY DOBRZYNSKI** is Pastor at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Schererville, as well as Director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Gary since 1992. He initiated the first diocesan liturgical lay ministry CONFERENCE in 1986 and continues on the CONFERENCE planning committee. Under the tutelage of the Capuchin Franciscans he attended St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin. He was ordained in 1984 after earning a BA in History from St. Meinrad College (1980) and an M.Div. from St. Meinrad School of Theology. In 1991 Fr. Dobrzynski received an MA in Liturgical Studies at the University of Notre Dame. In addition to his duties here in the diocese, he also served on the National Board of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions from 1997-2011.*

PRESENTADOR PRINCIPAL
DR. OSCAR CASTELLANOS, MA, M.DIV, EdD

La Iglesia nunca ha crecido por programas.
Ha crecido porque alguien invitó a alguien.

El río de la misericordia y el Amor de Dios existía antes que nosotros. Seguirá existiendo después de nosotros. Así es la fe. Así es la Iglesia. Así es la liturgia. No la creamos nosotros; entramos en ella. Y algún día, otros entrarán después de nosotros.

Para la comunidad hispana, esto puede convertirse en una invitación apremiante a reconocer cómo nuestra cultura, nuestras tradiciones de fe y nuestro testimonio personal ayudan a hacer avanzar ese río mediante un ciclo continuo de llamada, formación, respuesta e invitación. Hemos recibido este don de otros y ahora se nos ha confiado la tarea de compartirlo con las generaciones futuras.



***EL DR. OSCAR CASTELLANOS**, se desempeña como Gerente de Programas Bilingües e Iniciativas Hispanas en OCP (Oregon Catholic Press). Es totalmente bilingüe y bicultural (inglés y español), y cuenta con una excelente experiencia en gestión de programas, oratoria, docencia y pastoral con comunidades hispanas. Posee una licenciatura en Filosofía y Estudios Religiosos, así como una maestría en Teología del Seminario Mt. Angel. También cursó estudios de teología en el Seminario St. John (Camarillo, California) y en la Universidad de Notre Dame (Indiana) como parte del programa de Maestría en Divinidad. Obtuvo su doctorado en Liderazgo Organizacional en la Universidad Marian (Indiana) en 2025. Fuera de OCP, a Oscar le encanta pasar tiempo con su familia, especialmente con sus tres hijos: Santi, Miranda y Febe. También disfruta pasear a sus perros y arbitrar partidos de fútbol a nivel de escuela secundaria.*

SÁBADO, 7 DE NOVIEMBRE

TRAINING SESSIONS

LECTORS

REV. BILL STENZEL

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

REV. STEVEN CARAHER

MINISTERS OF CARE TRAINING / RENEWAL

DEACON MICHAEL HALAS

MUSIC MINISTERS TRAINING / RENEWAL

CAROLYN PIRTLE

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

REV. JERRY SCHWEITZER

MINISTERS OF ART & ENVIRONMENT TRAINING / RENEWAL

REV. PETER MUHA

SACRISTANS TRAINING / RENEWAL

DEACON ROBERT GROMALA

SESIONES DE ENTRENAMIENTO

LECTORES

DR. OSCAR CASTELLANOS

MINISTROS EXTRAORDINARIOS DE LA SAGRADA COMUNIÓN

PADRE IVAN ALATORRE

MINISTROS DE CUIDADO FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN

DIÁCONO JIM CARISTI

MINISTROS DE MÚSICA FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN

MICHELLE ALEXANDER

LA ORDEN DE INICIACIÓN CRISTIANA FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN

FELICITAS Y SANTOS REYES

SACRISTANES FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN

PADRE ENMANUEL REYES, AIC

If you have never been formally trained as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, or a Lector (reader) or as a Minister of Care or a Cantor these multi-part training sessions are for you. If you are new to any of these ministries these training sessions are a necessity. In addition to practical knowledge one needs to properly carry out these ministries there is both a spiritual and theological knowledge that is necessary. Each session deals with a particular aspect of the ministry for which you are being trained. Thus, the lay minister may be properly equipped to carry out the ministry entrusted to them. Each session builds on the one before. Taking on one of the ministries mentioned is not simply doing a job, it is an invitation to enter more deeply in relationship with Christ who is the "prime" minister. Christ imparts the gifts needed to engage in these ministries. Thus, a lay minister needs to know the depth and breadth of the ministry they assume. Theological, historical, spiritual and practical knowledge is needed and will be provided in the CONFERENCE Training Sessions.

Si nunca han sido formalmente entrenados como Ministros Extraordinarios de la Sagrada Comunión, o de Lectores o de Ministros de Cuidado o de Cantor, estas sesiones de varias partes son para ustedes. Si son nuevos en alguno de estos ministerios, estas sesiones de entrenamiento son una necesidad. Además de conocimientos prácticos para llevar a cabo estos ministerios existe un conocimiento espiritual y teológico necesario. Cada sesión se trata de algún aspecto particular del ministerio del que se está entrenando. Así, el ministro laico puede estar equipado propiamente para llevar a cabo su ministerio. Cada sesión aumenta sobre la anterior. Tomar uno de los ministerios mencionados no es simplemente cumplir con un trabajo, es una invitación de entrar profundamente en una relación con Jesucristo, quien es el "primer" ministro. Cristo imparte los dones necesarios para participar en estos ministerios. Así el ministro laico tiene que conocer la profundidad y amplitud del ministerio que asume. El conocimiento teológico, histórico y práctico es necesario y se proporciona en las sesiones de entrenamiento de la CONFERENCIA.

RENEWAL FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION ANNE MCGOWAN

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are called not only to reverence Christ's Body in the liturgy but also to become living witnesses of Christ's presence in daily life. They carry the hope of the Eucharist into homes, hospitals, and the wider world and embody the Church's communion in Christ. Come be renewed in mission, equipped to serve with confidence, and strengthened as a Eucharistic people of hope.

RENEWAL FOR LECTORS DEACON RON PYLE

As we conclude this Jubilee Year of Hope it is good for us to reconsider the nourishment of our Hope that comes to us in the Word of God in Sacred Scripture. Hope that is alive and maturing needs to be nourished regularly with God's Word. We will explore how God's written Word enhances the Lector's faith life and ministry. Proclaiming the Word should also enhance our prayer life. Come for practical exercises and readings with interactive discussions!

TRAINING / RENEWAL FOR MINISTERS OF CARE DEACON MICHAEL HALAS

At the Second Vatican Council, Pope St. John XXIII indicated in his address that the church needs to be "the medicine of mercy" to everyone. As a minister of care, you take on the responsibility of soothing and healing people's lives by bringing to them the medicine of peace, love and mercy, in the name of Christ Jesus. Because of this, individuals and families find Hope in Christ through your service to them.

TRAINING / RENEWAL FOR MINISTERS OF ART & ENVIRONMENT REV. PETER MUHA

The Liturgy is the source and summit of our hope. Art and environment are important channels for shaping our experience of the Mass and other liturgical rites. We will explore the principles we use to make artistic choices in preparing for such sacred celebrations.

RENEWAL FOR ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAMS DR. MICHAEL PORADEK

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is the Church's primary process of discipleship formation, not only for parish candidates and catechumens but annually for all the baptized. Whether you have been involved in initiation ministry for years or are new, this workshop provides the opportunity to review and renew our understanding of this dynamic process. We'll explore the OCIA's terminology, rites, unique periods, steps and ministries, as well as discuss best practices to enable you to embrace, or re-embrace, this vital ministry for your parish.

TRAINING / RENEWAL FOR MUSIC MINISTERS CAROLYN PIRTLE

Singing the Journey of Hope: "Sing as pilgrims do on their journey" St. Augustine writes. As the Pilgrim Church adds new members at the Vigil, we strengthen and renew the hope-filled song that guides our every step. Come and join in the song!

RENEWAL FOR HOSPITALITY / GREETERS JOHN KYLER

Successful hospitality ministry requires more than one-off programs and happenstance interactions with parishioners. Instead, building a parish culture of hospitality takes commitment and intentionality from all members of the community. We must extend hospitality ministry beyond door greeters and after-Mass donuts — as important as those are! As ministers of Hope, we trust in the light of Christ that brightens even the darkest corners of our world.

FORMATION / RENEWAL FOR SACRISTANS DEACON ROBERT GROMALA

Inconspicuous, but always present before, during, and after the Mass, the sacristan not only keeps eye, ear, and heart focused on God, but also the needs of the liturgy itself and the various other liturgical ministers. Beyond preparing vessels and ritual books, liturgical calendars and vestment colors, clean ups and set ups, the sacristan's heart is one of attentive and generous service. In a ministry where you take care of the needs of everyone else, come take time to renew yourself!

RENOVACIÓN PARA MINISTROS EXTRAORDINARIOS DE LA SAGRADA COMUNIÓN PADRE LEO GAJARDO

El Año Jubilar es un año especial de gracia y renovación en la Iglesia Católica. Como ministros eucarísticos de la Sagrada Comunión, es fácil ver el ministerio simplemente como algo rutinario. Al explorar la esperanza como virtud y la misión del Año Jubilar, esta presentación invita a los ministros a redescubrir la belleza de su ministerio a la luz de Cristo, quien nos da la esperanza de vivir como discípulos misioneros.

RENOVACIÓN PARA LECTORES PADRE JEFF BURTON

En este Año Jubilar de la Esperanza, la Iglesia celebra el paso por las puertas santas. Jesús incluso se llama a sí mismo la «puerta» por la que sus ovejas pueden entrar y encontrar pastos. En esta sesión, exploraremos cómo la Palabra de Dios es una puerta para entrar en la vida de Dios. Como lectores, la Palabra de Dios debe estar constantemente en nuestro corazón y en nuestros labios para que proclamemos a Cristo digna y adecuadamente.

FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN PARA MINISTROS DE CUIDADO DIÁCONO JIM CARISTI

Mientras el Cuerpo de Cristo continúa regresando a la Misa, ¿cómo podemos nosotros, como Ministros de Cuidado, ayudar a salvar la desconexión entre los enfermos y los confinados en el hogar del Cuerpo de Cristo con los presentes en la Misa? El ministerio de "presencia" es desinteresado y da vida a los enfermos, a los confinados en casa y al Ministro de Cuidado.

FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN PARA LOS EQUIPOS DE INICIACIÓN CRISTIANA DE LA ORDEN FELICITAS Y SANTOS REYES

La Orden de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos nos ayuda a ver que la auténtica catequesis catecumenal implica un aprendizaje en el camino de vida cristiana. Esta sesión profundiza en cuatro facetas de la formación encontradas en el párrafo 75 del OCIA: catequesis doctrinal, práctica de la vida cristiana, ritos litúrgicos y vida apostólica, que resuenan con el modelo de vida cristiana de Hechos 2, 42. Esta sesión desafiará a los ministros de iniciación a ir más allá de un modelo de catequesis basado en un programa y proporcionará consejos prácticos para adoptar el enfoque más holístico de la catequesis que se prevé en el OCIA.

FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN PARA MINISTROS DE MÚSICA MICHELLE ALEXANDER

Este taller de renovación para grupos de músicos litúrgicos ofrece un espacio para fortalecer la unidad del ministerio musical al servicio de la asamblea. A través del repaso del Tiempo Ordinario de la Misa y el aprendizaje de cantos nuevos seleccionados, los participantes ensayarán técnicas de conjunto, balance de voces e integración instrumental. La sesión invita a redescubrir la música como nuestra misión pastoral, animando la celebración con alegría, esperanza y espíritu de servicio.

FORMACIÓN / RENOVACIÓN PARA SACRISTANES PADRE ENMANUEL REYES, AIC

Discreto, pero siempre presente antes, durante y después de la Misa, el sacristán mantiene no solo la mirada, el oído y el corazón centrados en Dios, sino también atentos a las necesidades de la propia liturgia y de los demás ministros litúrgicos. Más allá de preparar los vasos sagrados y los libros rituales, los calendarios litúrgicos y los colores de los ornamentos, o de ocuparse de la limpieza y el montaje, el corazón del sacristán se caracteriza por un servicio atento y generoso. En un ministerio dedicado a atender las necesidades de los demás, tómese un tiempo para renovarse!

PRESENTER PROFILES

PADRE IVAN ALATORRE es el Vicario Pastoral de la parroquia San Juan Bosco y el co-capellán de Bishop Noll Institute en Hammond, IN. El Padre Ivan creció en Lake Station, donde fue feligrés de San Marcos y después San José Obrero, en Gary, IN. Fue ordenado sacerdote en junio de 2025 después de terminar sus estudios de seminario en Sacred Heart Major Seminary en Detroit, MI. Actualmente es vicario parroquial en la parroquia de San Juan Bosco en Hammond, IN.

MICHELLE ALEXANDER, LCSW es ministra católica de música litúrgica, compositora e instrumentista, dedicada a fomentar un culto lleno de oración y vitalidad desde 1995. Con una pasión de toda la vida por la música sacra, aporta riqueza multilingüe e intercultural y sensibilidad pastoral a su ministerio. Con 30 años de experiencia como directora de coro, cantora y educadora, Michelle ha guiado conjuntos musicales para unir voz y espíritu en la celebración de la Eucaristía. Directora del Capítulo de la Diócesis de Gary de NPM, miembro de la Asociación Nacional de Profesores de Música y miembro de la Comisión Litúrgica de la Diócesis de Gary.

REV. JEFFREY BURTON was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Gary in 2018, after receiving his M.Div. from the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, IL. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in New Media-Journalism and Political Science—Public Administration from Valparaiso University and worked as a full-time news reporter for six years prior to entering the seminary. He earned a B.Phil. from Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit in 2014, a certificate in Spanish Language Studies from Academia Latinoamericana in Quito, Ecuador in 2015, completed his Clinical Pastoral Education through the St. Joseph Mercy Health System in Ann Arbor, MI. Throughout his formation and after being ordained, Father Jeff has served at Holy Spirit in Winfield, Sharing Meadows in Rolling Prairie, St. Andrew the Apostle and the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal in Merrillville, St. Michael the Archangel in Schererville, St. Mary of the Lake in Miller Beach, St. Mary in Griffith, and St. Mary in Crown Point. He previously served as Associate Pastor of St. Paul Church in Valparaiso, on the Priest Council under Bishop Hying, and at Andrean High School in Merrillville. Father Jeff is currently Pastor of St. John Bosco Parish and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Administrator of St. Joseph Church (all in Hammond), Chaplain to Bishop Noll Institute, a member of the Bishop Noll Board and a member of the Diocese of Gary CYO Board of Directors.

REV. STEVEN CARAHER is the oldest of 4 children from a loving Catholic family in Munster, IN, having attended St. Thomas More school where he was first attracted to the priesthood through altar serving and hearing the stories of heroic priests like St. Maximilian Kolbe. He has a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Computer Science from Indiana University. During his years at IU, Fr. Steven experienced a deep conversion of heart and conviction that the Lord was calling him to enter seminary, and after graduation he applied to study for the priesthood for the Diocese of Gary. After seminary studies at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago, and Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, he was ordained a priest in June 2024. He is currently the Administrator of Holy Spirit Parish in Winfield, IN, and is also the chaplain for Andrean High School.

DIÁCONO JIM CARISTI fue ordenado al diaconado en junio de 2007. Él y su esposa Martha tienen dos hijos y dos nietos. Desde 1980 es profesor de informática y matemáticas en la Universidad de Valparaíso. El diácono Jim está muy involucrado en el ministerio hispano, la formación de adultos en la fe, la preparación matrimonial, el ministerio hospitalario y el ministerio a personas que sufren de Alzheimer. También es un jugador de raquetbol de torneos y espera convertirse en el campeón mundial en su grupo de edad.

PADRE LEONARDO GAJARDO nació en Santiago, Chile, y emigró con su familia a los Estados Unidos en 1990. Hizo sus estudios de seminario en el Seminario Mayor del Sagrado Corazón en Detroit, MI y completó su formación en el seminario en la Universidad Católica de América. Él fue ordenado presbítero de la Diócesis de Gary en 2006 y sirvió en Hammond y Valparaíso. Desde el 2011 hasta el 2014, él sirvió como miembro de la facultad del Seminario Mayor de Santa María en Baltimore, MD y desde el 2018 hasta el 2021 del Colegio Teológico de la Universidad Católica de América en Washington, DC. Actualmente, Padre Leonardo es el párroco de la iglesias de Santa María Goretti y de San José en Dyer y el Director del Programa de Formación Diaconal de la Diócesis de Gary. Él es licenciado de derecho canónico y doctor de teología litúrgica.

DEACON ROBERT GROMALA serves the Diocese of Gary as Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies USA and as a permanent deacon at St. John the Evangelist Parish in St. John, IN. His ministry reflects a deep commitment to the Eucharist, evangelization, missionary discipleship, and helping others encounter Christ through the gospel and worship of Christ at Liturgy. Deacon Robert is actively involved in parish and diocesan ministry, including preaching, Eucharistic Adoration, leading pilgrimages, retreats, leading mission trips and Catholic school ministry, and serving at diocesan liturgical celebrations. He has also helped lead initiatives focused on strengthening Eucharistic devotion and encouraging the faithful to carry what they experience at the altar into lives of discipleship, service, and mission. Deacon Robert is SVP Head of Retail Banking at Parkway Bank & Trust and holds a C.F.P. License. He obtained his Executive MBA from Indiana University. As a married deacon and father of two, he brings both a pastoral and practical perspective to ministry.

DEACON MICHAEL W. HALAS is a Chaplain at St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago. He was ordained to the Diaconate in 2007 and serves at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Highland, where he is a catechist in the Religious Education Program and directs the Liturgy. He serves as Master of Ceremonies to the Bishop and assists at diocesan liturgies at Holy Angels Cathedral. He also serves on the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, Sacraments/Prayer and Worship Think Tank, is a member of the CONFERENCE planning committee and a member of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains. Deacon is a 2003 graduate of the Diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program and has two units of Clinical Pastoral Education. He holds an MA in Liturgy from Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

JOHN T. KYLER is a Catholic author, composer, educator, and speaker whose work focuses on the intersection of liturgy, justice, and healthy vulnerability in pastoral ministry. In addition to experience working in parish faith formation and high school and collegiate campus ministry, John is an instructor in the Emmaus Institute for Ministry Formation and a regular contributor to several pastoral magazines and journals, including U.S. Catholic and GIA Quarterly. He holds a Master of Education from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Theological Studies from Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary. He is the author of several books, including *Welcome All as Christ: Reimagining Parish Hospitality* (Liturgical Press, 2022) and co-author of *Christ Our Center: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year* (LTP, 2025).

PRESENTER PROFILES

REV. PETER MUHA is a priest for the Diocese of Gary, and he completed his education at St. Meinrad Seminary in southern Indiana. After college, he went to Rome to complete his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained a deacon in Rome at the Basilica of St. Peter in Vatican City. He has since served as a priest at St. Paul in Valparaiso, St. Michael in Schererville, Our Lady of Grace in Highland, St. John Bosco in Hammond. He has served as pastor of St. Edward in Lowell, Our Lady of Consolation in Merrillville, St. Joseph in Dyer, and most recently became the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Crown Point in 2025.

ANNE MCGOWAN, M.T.S., PH.D. is an Associate Professor of Liturgy at Catholic Theological Union (Chicago). Before joining the faculty at CTU in 2016, Anne was the inaugural postdoctoral associate in liturgical studies at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (2011–2012), a postdoctoral teaching scholar in the department of theology at the University of Notre Dame, and an adjunct professor of theology teaching in the area of liturgical studies at St. John's School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota. Her professional memberships include the North American Academy of Liturgy, the Catholic Academy of Liturgy, the Catholic Theological Society of America, and the American Academy of Religion. She is the author of *Eucharistic Epicleses, Ancient and Modern* (2014) and co-author (with Paul Bradshaw) of *The Pilgrimage of Egeria* (2018), both published by Liturgical Press.

CAROLYN PIRTLE, M.M., MSM, M.A. is the Program Director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, overseeing the planning and facilitation of the Center's signature events, including the Mathis Liturgical Leadership Program. Additionally, Carolyn assists with liturgical planning and formation for the McGrath Institute, and serves as steward of the it's Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible*. Hailing from Kansas, Carolyn holds a B.M. in piano performance, a M.M. in music theory-composition, a MSM in vocal/choral sacred music, and a M.A. in theology. An award-winning composer, Carolyn has set the antiphons and psalms for the entire Liturgy of the Hours, as well as creating "Behold God's Love: A Eucharistic Musical," written in honor of the National Eucharistic Revival. She is also a widely published author of numerous articles and a favorite presenter on the theology and practice of liturgical music, the importance of the arts in Catholic life and religious education, and formation in liturgical and devotional prayer, particularly for the domestic church.

DR. MICHAEL PORADEK, PH.D. is an Administrator, educator, and life-long learner. Having recently completed his Ph.D. in Leadership with research in mission-based leadership development, he serves as Vice President for Mission Integration at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, IL. He has been a member of our Gary Diocesan Liturgical Commission since 2019, and was past Vice Chair of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions where he continues to serve as a consultant. Michael has served in multiple liturgical ministries at both the parish and diocesan levels in Wisconsin.

PADRE ENMANUEL REYES, AIC nació en la República Dominicana y es el segundo de tres hermanos. Inspirado por la santidad de San Juan Bosco y tras un periodo de discernimiento vocacional, descubrió su vocación en la espiritualidad trinitaria de los Hijos de la Madre de Dios e ingresó en el Instituto de la Inmaculada Concepción. Actualmente se desempeña como secretario general y formador en la Casa de Formación San José, en Restrepo (Meta, Colombia). Fue ordenado sacerdote el 6 de febrero de 2021 en Colombia y actualmente presta servicio en la parroquia de Santa Margarita María en Hammond.

FELICITAS Y SANTOS REYES son originarios de Michoacán, México— ambos provienen de familias numerosas y son higienista dental y remodelador de casas de profesión. Se casaron en la parroquia St. Joseph en LaPorte (ahora Sagrada Familia), donde han sido feligreses durante 25 años con sus dos hijos. Han participado en varios ministerios durante más de 15 años. Somos la primera generación de graduados del programa de Ministros Eclesiales laicos en Español de nuestra Diócesis. Y actualmente estamos impartiendo clases de OCIA en nuestra parroquia.

DEACON RON PYLE has been a parishioner at St. Michael the Archangel Church since 1984. He served in various liturgical ministries, including Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and Lector before entering the Diaconate Formation Program, being ordained in June 2011. Deacon Ron continues to work with liturgical ministers, including his role as coordinator of parish altar servers. He is also a member of the Deacon Formation Board for the diocese.

REV. JERRY SCHWEITZER is a priest for the Diocese of Gary. He was born and raised in Hammond IN, attending Our Lady of Perpetual Help Grade School. He further attended St. Lawrence Seminary High School in Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, Illinois Benedictine College in Lisle, Illinois, and St. Meinrad Seminary, in St. Meinrad, Indiana. Fr. Jerry was ordained a priest on August 28, 1971 and has served in various parishes as Associate Pastor: St. Joseph (Hammond), SS Peter & Paul, St. Patrick (Chesterton) and as Pastor of St. Stephen, Martyr, St. Matthias, Sacred Heart, St. Martin and St. Mary (Otis), along with other positions in the Diocese of Gary. He is a teacher of Biblical Studies as well as a Director of Spiritual Retreats and Conferences. Since 2015, Fr. Jerry has been a "Senior Priest," but continues to be active in ministry assisting with liturgies in the Archdiocese of Chicago and Diocese of Gary.

REV. BILL STENZEL is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He was ordained in 1975 and retired from full-time parish ministry in 2014. He was an active member of the Newman Club as an undergraduate in college, and his calling coincided with the early years of Church Renewal following the Second Vatican Council. As a parish priest in Chicago, Father Bill participated in facilitating the call to lay ministry to the people of many parishes. For over 40 years he helped build training programs for calling and forming men and women to ministry.

CONFERENCE '26 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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"In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem."

-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #8