



# The PeliDeacon



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

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## **Deacons Enjoy Lunch with the Bishop**

With nothing on the agenda but fellowship and sharing a meal together (a very good meal!), thirteen of Louisiana's deacons gathered with Bishop Shannon Duckworth for lunch at Lula's Restaurant Distillery on St. Charles Ave. in New Orleans. Having just returned from General Convention to a very crowded schedule, the Bishop was happy for a bit of down time. "In the midst of a busy week, it was just perfect to take a breath and have lunch with this fantastic group of Deacons," she said. "Each of them is a gift to this diocese!"

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## Liturgical Practicum Developed for Training New Deacons

Deacon Charles deGravelles and The Rev. Jay Angerer, rector of All Saints River Ridge, collaborated over a period of months to develop and test a practicum on the deacon's role in liturgy to be used in training those preparing for ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons. DeGravelles serves as Archdeacon of the diocese and as clergy-in-charge at The Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Rosedale.

“Father Jay, who teaches in the Iona School for Ministry/ Marble School for Theological Formation, wanted something he could use in a single session but something that would cover all aspects of what the deacon does in liturgy,” deGravelles said. “He wanted it very hands-on, but we also wanted to include some of the theology and history behind what deacons do.”



Mut learns of early foundations of liturgy.

All Saints Church. Because one of the deacon's liturgical responsibilities is to assist the Bishop in congregational worship, Obier was able to share with the others that specialized set of liturgical duties.

“Father Jay has an excellent background and a real passion for liturgy,” deGravelles said, “and he's a gifted teacher. Our training session was wonderful. We worked a full six hours to get in as much as we could. As a verger at his church, St. Margaret's in Baton Rouge, Les was already very comfortable with the liturgy, but of course the deacon's role is unique and challenging to someone who is just starting to do it. All of us were at Les's ordination and were proud of the grace with which he performed his liturgical duties.” Lester Mut was ordained a deacon at St. Margaret's on June 10, 2024.

DeGravelles added, “Now that we have a practicum, I'm anxious to use it as a foundation for a liturgical customary for deacons in the diocese so we can have a uniformity of practice, wherever we may be serving.”



Father Angerer explains the proper way to fill an oil stock.

Angerer, who is also chair of the Diocesan Commission on Ministry, needed to have something ready to use prior to the ordination of Lester M. Mut, a candidate for the diaconate. “We had a built-in deadline,” deGravelles said, “and Les was our willing ‘guinea pig.’”

DeGravelles shared insights from his long experience as a deacon. Ordained in 1995, he has served under four bishops. Deacon Cindy Obier, Chaplain to Bishop Shannon Duckworth, also joined Angerer, deGravelles and Mut for the April 27 training session at



Mut practices at All Saints altar.

## Archdeacon Addresses London Priests, Reconnects with Former Student

Archdeacon Charles deGravelles addressed a group of Anglican priests in March of 2024 on his experiences as a spiritual advisor for a death row inmate at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. Delivered via Zoom, deGravelles' talk reached 27 members of Sion College, an organization which supports the education and fellowship of Church of England clergy in London. DeGravelles also answered questions about the death penalty in the U.S. and his prison ministry work in Louisiana for over thirty years.

DeGravelles was invited to speak by The Rev. Mae Mouk Christie, vicar of All Saints, an Anglican parish in southwest London. Christie, then Mae Mouk, grew up in Baton Rouge where she and her family were members at Trinity Episcopal. "I prepared Mae for confirmation," deGravelles remembers. "She was a very bright student, and I followed her career over the years." After earning a degree in Political Science in the U.S., Christie heard a calling to the priesthood, and through a series of events, ended up studying theology at Cambridge and being ordained as an Anglican priest in London."



The Rev. Mae Christie leads a parishioner in prayer.

"Mae was very moved by a sermon I preached at Trinity way back when she was in middle school," deGravelles said, "and she never forgot it. The sermon included a discussion of the death penalty, and years later, when she was asked to find a speaker for her London colleagues, she called me. Then it was my turn to be moved. That I had made a difference in the life of this bright young woman, now a priest in the Church of England, well, it blew me away."



DeGravelles and Taylor study the Bible on Death Row.

Christie asked deGravelles to recount his relationship with Feltus Taylor, a Baton Rouge man sentenced to death at Angola prison. "My time with Feltus, which lasted three years and ended with his execution, was one of the most challenging but meaningful experiences of my life," deGravelles said.

"There is no death penalty in England or, for that matter, anywhere in Europe," Christie said, "so my fellow clergy wanted to understand what it was like to minister alongside someone who has been sentenced to death by the government. And how that ministry and experience might ripple out and transform other communities and contexts in pastoral care, discipleship, and church life?"

"And it did have a ripple effect," deGravelles said. "Many people at my church and across the diocese became involved in ministering to Feltus Taylor, and in working to abolish the death penalty."

# A Day on Deacons

Solomon Episcopal Conference Center

54296 LA-445, Loranger, LA 70446

Thursday, September 26, 2024

9:00 am — 3:00 pm



What is a deacon in the Episcopal Church?

How does one become a deacon?

- Learn about deacons at a day-long conference.
  - Free of charge. Lunch included.
- Who should come? Those in personal or formal discernment, postulants, anyone just curious to know more about deacons.
- Bishop Shannon Duckworth will lead 11:30 am Eucharist.

FREE OF CHARGE. OPEN TO ALL.

LUNCH INCLUDED

Please register at SECC (985) 748-6634



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