Dear Members of our Catholic Communities,

Some of you will remember that some time back we held, at Mater Dei Hall, an informational meeting regarding training to be a deacon in our church. At that time the Diocese of Reno was attempting to recruit a new director for the program, but the deacon chosen had to turn down the position because of a family situation. Happily, our diocese has been successful in recruiting a new Director for Permanent Diaconate Formation, and who will also be Director for Family Life and Spirituality. His name is Deacon Joseph Bell. Deacon Joseph will be here in Elko on Saturday, September 9, and will have an informational meeting in Mater Dei Hall following the 5:00 PM Mass. At our last informational meeting we had a very nice attendance of some men in the parish who felt that they might want to test this vocation. Although time has passed, I hope that once again members of all our parishes (Elko, Wells, Carlin & Eureka) might consider this special vocation. Normally, the training of deacons takes place in Reno, one weekend each month during the school year. Because of advances in technology, it is possible that some weekend classes can be attended locally, using the internet and either Skype or zoom. This would be especially important during the winter, when sometimes travel to Reno can be difficult. The upcoming training for Lay Ministry will have some weekend remote classes here in Elko, so that will be a good test of the feasibility of long-distance learning. Of course, part of the deacon training experience is the interaction that takes place among the candidates, their wives, and the teaching faculty. Although geographically the Humboldt Deanery of Parishes (Elko, Wells, Carlin, Eureka, Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, and our Jackpot mission) is the largest in the diocese of Reno, presently we only have one active deacon (Franklin Martinez), and there is certainly room for more. One parish in the Reno area has six permanent deacons attached to it, so you can see the disparity in different areas. I am hoping that suitably qualified men in our parishes might attend this meeting in order to better discern if a call to permanent diaconate is present. At present, a requirement is that the candidate be 35 years of age or older. If married, and the deacon’s spouse passes away, at present the regulations require that the permanent deacon not remarry. However, presently the Vatican is reconsidering this requirement, and I feel the policy will change in the future. The four-year training program involves academic formation; supervises ministry formation; pastoral formation; liturgical formation; spiritual formation; and human formation. If interested, please contact any of our priests or Deacon Franklin, as we need to have an idea of the size of the attendance on September 9.

God bless,

Father Dan