



Heart of the Parish

“People are the Heart of the Parish”

June 2023

Servant of the Service Mysteries— Deacon Charles Sheik

Deacons wear many hats, all in service of God and the church. Deacon Charles “Chuck” Sheik became a deacon ten years ago, while a long-time member of St. Elizabeth Ann parish. When his pastor there, Father Walter Nolte, was transferred to St. Bernard he encouraged Deacon Sheik to follow him to fill a need. After prayerful consideration, he accepted the invitation and has been serving us for eight years. His wife of nearly 42 years, Pat, serves with him.

A deacon is second in hierarchy of a parish. A priest is first and is the servant of the sacrificial mysteries; a deacon is the servant of the service mysteries of Christ. His duties include all that a priest does except saying mass and hearing confessions. To become a deacon a man must be between 35 and 55 years of age; he may be invited or have a calling to serve. If he is married, it requires the commitment of both a man and his wife. A year is spent in discerning the call of the vocation. Then comes four years of study before a final commitment and approval by the wife and a panel of serving deacons. When ordained by the Bishop the deacon may be called to serve in any parish of the diocese, wherever the need occurs. There is no salary. A wife serves along with her husband in whatever capacity is needed. For instance, Pat accompanies Deacon Chuck on all of his hospital or home calls, as well as serving in other ways.

Deacon Sheik was born and raised in a rural area of Ivanhoe, Minnesota, one of nine children, four brothers and four sisters; one of the girls is his twin. He attended trade school and spent 46 years with the same company as a designer of hydraulic equipment, and lived in several places.

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His wife Pat was in the insurance business with the same company for 40 years. Both are now retired. They had two children, Cassandra who passed away from a rare form of cancer and its treatment in 2021. Their son Chris lives in Omaha. They also have a grandson, Grant, age eleven, whom they recently took on a trip to California. When he has the time Deacon Sheik enjoys fishing, playing cards, and playing some golf.

Deacon Sheik has a deep faith and loves to share it. One of his first assignments at St Bernard was to lead RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.) This is the program interested adults undertake to learn about the Catholic faith and to discern whether or not they wish to become a practicing Catholic. For eight years he has led several adults into the Catholic faith. The program runs weekly from September to April each year, ending during Holy Saturday services when the participants receive needed sacraments and commit to being faithful practicing Catholics. The best way to encourage these potential Catholics is to set an example and to be available to them to answer questions on how your faith has affected your life. Deacon Sheik encourages any parishioner to join in with the next RCIA sessions to learn more about your faith and be an example to the applicants. Catholics of all ages, even cradle Catholics, would benefit in filling in the things you forgot from grade school religion classes, or missed in high school when you were not paying attention. It will help you review and confirm what you do know about your faith and bring you up to date on the church changes and practices that have occurred over the years. Faithful, practicing Catholics are the best examples these students could have.

Deacons fill many roles, especially behind the scenes, for our parish. We thank them and their wives, past and present for their selfless service. We are grateful too for the continued service of the wives of the deacons we have lost. With only a single priest serving a church or family of churches, the deacons and their wives are a necessity and a blessing, and we thank them for serving us.

Written by Mary T. Mick

Upcoming Events

Farewell Celebration for Father Dan—Sunday, June 25, after 8:30 mass

Father Michael Gadache joins St Bernard as Pastor—July 1

Call to Action

School cleaning—daily throughout June, 9-12, 12-3, contact Barb at 402/960-2775