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PRESS RELEASE

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Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan to Ordain Seventeen Men to Become Deacons in the Roman Catholic

Saturday, July 11, 2009, 10:00 AM
The Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Santa Fe

Albuquerque, NM—Thursday, July 09, 2009-- Immediate Release -- With great joy the Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan looks forward to ordaining 17 men to the Order of Deacon Saturday, July 11, 2009 at 10:00 AM in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis, Santa Fe.

The Order has its roots in *The Acts of the Apostles* (6:1-6) when the Apostles learn that widows and orphans were not being cared for. “Brothers, select from among you seven men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task.... They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them.” Pope Paul VI, upon restoring the Order of Deacon to a permanent place in the Church in 1966 said, “the permanent diaconate should be restored as a driving force for the Church's service (*diakonia*) toward the local Christian communities, and as a sign or sacrament of the Lord Christ himself, who 'came not to be served but to serve'.”

Today, permanent deacons assist in a wide range of service to the Church. The ministry of deacon is similar to but different from that of a priest or bishop. A deacon is ordained to primarily minister to the needy and poor and also be a minister of the word and sacrament. Deacons are able to celebrate the sacraments of baptism and marriage, and in the Archdiocese, several serve as Parish Life Coordinators in communities that do not have a priest-pastor. Deacons can also be married men.

Permanent deacons play a significant role in helping to address the needs of the Archdiocese. Unlike the transitional diaconate that applies to priests before ordination, this is a complementary and permanent role that expands the Church's ability to serve its people by works of charity. This includes a wide range of service especially to those on the fringes of society: the sick, the elderly and the imprisoned.

Preparation for the permanent diaconate is demanding, requiring four years of study in courses such as theology and scripture as well as practical ministry time spent in the parish. “It's not for the faint of heart, that's for sure,” says Deacon Mark Bussemeier, Director of Deacon Formation for the Archdiocese. “It requires a great deal of commitment as well as tremendous support from family, friends and their parish, both prior to and after ordination.”

Permanent deacons have diverse backgrounds and secular careers. They must carefully balance their free time between family, employment responsibilities, charitable works and service to their parishes. For more information contact: Deacon Mark Bussemeier, 505.821.1571.