



Deacon Deliberations by Deacon Gary Kupsak

“Tolerance”

I hope that your holidays were joyful and that all of us are moving into the New Year with a renewed sense of making 2018 a better year than was the last, and by improving ourselves in the upcoming year, so that we can have a positive impact on those around us (our family, friends, and our co-workers) and more fully live our lives as Christ's disciples. I'm sure by now, we've had enough holiday dinners with tables full of relatives who are sometimes “hard to take,” and while eating turkey and pumpkin pie have thought, “How can I possibly be related to these people?” Relatives have always been easy targets for our family jokes about petty annoyances, but we've all had experiences with people who for some reason “rub” us the wrong way. Annoying co-workers, noisy next-door-neighbors, rude waitresses, pushy salespeople... you know the types. I don't know about you, but there are some people that I just rather not be around. I try to do my best to be tolerant of others—at least when I'm around them!

In light of all the tensions in our world, many of which are caused by intolerance, I've taken inventory of myself and I've set as one of my “ambitions,” (I don't call them resolutions) for 2018 to try to be more tolerant. Tolerance is mainly known as a willingness to accept others and their beliefs, even if we don't necessarily agree with them.

How often have we been intolerant in action or thought? How often have we chosen to completely close our minds to a person or an idea because it was different from the way we were brought up, or the way we looked at things. How many times have we been downright intolerant of our family, friends and those around us by “digging in our heels” and refusing to see an issue in another light.

If I'm going to try to become more tolerant, if any of us feel that we should explore becoming more tolerant, some notes I gleaned from my deacon formation studies in “Pastoral Theology,” (the science of the care of souls), may, with the grace of God assist us on our journey:

- 1. Be a Good Listener, Listen Carefully Without Jumping to Conclusions.** It really is easy to dismiss someone as soon as they strike up a conversation with you—almost like you're mentally rolling your eyes even though you're nodding politely. For once, listen to what they're saying—**really listen.**

2. Try to Understand the Other Person's Point of View. Now that you're listening to someone, resist the urge to totally discount what they're saying because it sounds "weird" to you. Try to understand what they're telling you—maybe they not getting their point across very well.

3. Agree to Disagree. You may not agree with the person and their beliefs or opinions, and that's okay. We're all different and it's okay to have different opinions or thoughts on what is "right."

Friends, if there ever was a time for tolerance to be a virtue we hold close and dear to us, it is now. It seems that every time we turn around, another intolerant act or speech or "tweet" is besieging the world we live in. Matthew 7:12 tell us, "Do to others whatever you would have them do unto you." *The Golden Rule*, a basic tenant of our Catholic faith, calls for us to be ever tolerant and patient with the world around us. As we begin our tolerance improving journey in 2018, let us all better try to, "**Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.**"

HAPPY NEW YEAR!