Welcome, everyone, to this celebration of life for Deacon Mel Melius.
I have to admit that my face is a little sore today
because last night at the vigil for Mel,
every story told about Mel & Karen brought laughter
and a big smile to my face.
I would also like to mention my stole.
Mel gave this to me at my ordination 9 years ago.
I never wore it because I never thought I was "Holy, holy, holy…"
But there was a common thread with all the stories
and that is what our 3 Readings tell us today.
That common thread is Love.
All of us are here today love Mel and Karen.

When I talk about Mel, I can't separate the two.
Mel & Karen were the poster couple
for the Sacrament of Marriage.
The 2 shall become 1.
When Mel was ordained in 1976 Karen was right beside him
as we heard last night at the Vigil.
Mel & Karen have the profound love that we heard about
in the 1st Reading from the Song of Songs…
or sometimes known as the Song of Solomon.

"Love set me as a seal upon your heart for love
is as strong as death. It's flames are a blazing fire.
Deep waters cannot quench it."

This reading vividly depicts the intensity and durability of Love.
Everyone will die to this earth,
but the Love we have for one another still carries on here.
Mel and Karen still love their children.
Mel and Karen still their grandchildren.
Mel and Karen still love All of us…And we love them right back.

Our 2nd Reading from Paul to the Corinthians has always fascinated me
because I read this Scripture at many funerals and weddings.
This Reading is a profound and timeless message of the power of Love.
St. Paul examines the characteristics and nature of love.
St. Paul emphasizes that in a Christian Community,
spiritual gifts are important.
It is love that surpasses everything.
Love is patient and kind.
doesn't' that describe Mel and Karen?
How do you suppose Mel and Karen lived this life of love?
Centering prayer was important to them both.
Mel and Karen either belonged or started Centering Prayer groups.
Centering prayer brings you closer to the heart of Jesus

which brings you closer to that union with God
through the Holy Spirit.
Our 2nd Reading ends with…

"Faith, Hope and Love…but the greatest is Love."

and highlights our lives as followers of Jesus.
All of us at one time or another has a Faith & Hope crisis,
such as is in our human nature…but what always rises is Love.
God never stops loving us.
Fr. Charlie Gorman used to say…
"God loves you…always has…always will…deal with it."

Our Gospel is a challenge to all of us about Faith.
Jesus states…

"I am the Resurrection and the Life…
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live…
and everyone who lives and believe in me will never die."

Then Jesus looks at Martha and all of us and asks,

"Do you believe this?"

I am very confident in Mel's answer…YES, I believe.

I want to conclude by thanking the children of Deacon Mel Melius…
Michelle, Tana, Doug, Pam, and Michael…
for being the family of a deacon of the Catholic Church.

You had to share your Dad with all these people

that came to celebrate his life on earth.

I know that at Christmas and Easter

you often scheduled your activities around the Church calendar.

I know Mel missed your ball games

because he was with a grieving family at a funeral.

I know he wasn't around on weekends

because he was at weddings and Mass.

This is why a bishop, 3 priests and a deacon are here…

to thank you for sharing your Dad & Mom

with the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

Rest in peace…Good and Faithful Servant, Mel!