

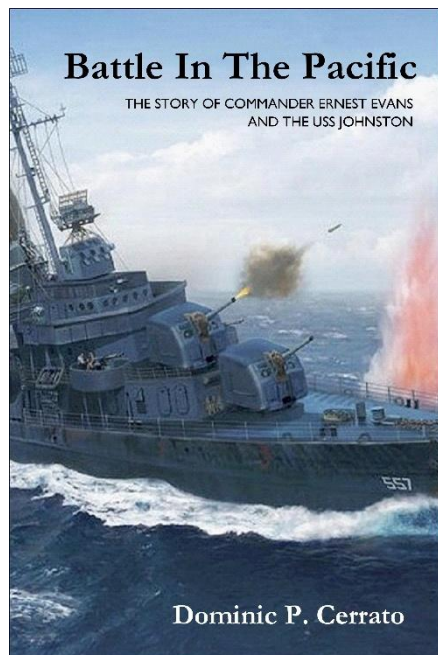
# Deepening the Call: Reflections on the Diaconate

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## Beyond the Ambo - Proclaiming the Gospel Through Storytelling and Sacrifice

As deacons, we are called to live out our ministry in both direct and indirect ways, consistently proclaiming the Gospel through various aspects of our lives. Directly, we serve through liturgical roles, preaching, and charitable works, bringing Christ's love and presence to those we meet. Yet, our call extends beyond these visible acts to include more subtle avenues – through our daily interactions, personal pursuits, and creative expressions. In all these ways, we are called to bear witness to Christ the Servant, seizing every opportunity to embody His teachings. Writing the historical novel, *Battle in the Pacific*, was one such indirect way in which I exercised my diaconate, blending the art of storytelling with the proclamation of timeless virtues.



Against the relentless fury of the Pacific Theater, *Battle in the Pacific* unveils the gripping, untold true saga of Commander Ernest Evans and the USS Johnston, daring to defy the overwhelming might of the Japanese fleet with sheer bravery and tactical genius. Facing a leviathan Japanese fleet, their exceptional strategic acumen and unparalleled bravery turn the tide in a monumental David versus Goliath clash. This narrative delves deep into the heart of human resilience, capturing the essence of sheer heroism against the stark backdrop of overwhelming odds. In this respect, *Battle in the Pacific* is more than a historical recount of World War II; it is a work that brings to life the virtues in a way that is accessible and relatable to readers.

In the writing process, I found myself drawn to the theme of sacrifice, particularly the idea that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for a friend, as stated in John 15:13. This theme is a central tenet of our faith and a profound expression of the diaconate. Through the characters in the novel – many of whom are based on real historical figures – we see this ultimate act of love and sacrifice played out in various ways. Sailors who risked their lives for their comrades, individuals who stood up against injustice at great personal cost, and leaders who bore the heavy burden of command – all reflect the self-giving love that Christ exemplifies and to which every Christian is called.

Writing *Battle in the Pacific* was, for me, a spiritual exercise as much as it was a creative one. It allowed me to delve deeply into the human condition, exploring how ordinary people can become extraordinary through acts of virtue and sacrifice. This exploration was a form of catechesis, a way to teach and inspire readers about the moral life beyond the limitations of a traditional ambo. It was an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel indirectly, through the power of narrative and the universal appeal of a compelling story.

Strange as it may sound, *Battle in the Pacific* became a unique expression of my diaconate, an indirect ministry that allowed me to extend my reach and share the message of the Gospel in a creative and impactful way. It is a testament to the idea that all aspects of a deacon's life – whether directly through ecclesial functions or indirectly through personal endeavors – can serve to glorify God and proclaim His saving love to the world. Through this work, I hope to touch hearts, provoke thought, and inspire action, all while staying true to my calling to serve Christ and His Church.

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