



THE FLAME

Volume 5 Number 4

www.ChicagoDeacons.org

August - September 2009

Overnight Convocation set

By Dan Welter

Mark your calendars! On the weekend of Jan. 23-24, there will be an overnight Convocation for the Diaconate community of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

This 2010 Convocation is a first-ever initiative to bring the ENTIRE Diaconate community together for prayer, education and community building, much like the semi-annual Convocation that is scheduled for the other clerics of the archdiocese. This Diaconate Convocation will replace the annual St. Stephen Symposium and the Spring Convocation for the coming year.

Overnight accommodations have been secured at the deeply discounted rate of \$89 per room at the Intercontinental Chicago O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, the site for the Convocation. Three meals will be included in the cost.

His Eminence, Francis Cardinal

George, O.M.I., will be joining us for this event. Each of the Episcopal Vicars has also been invited.

Fr. Mike Ahlstrom will be forwarding more information as the details for this event develop. He is requesting that each deacon consider this event as a ministerial expectation and that they arrange their schedules at their parish or other locations to allow for attendance at the Convocation on both days. A letter will be forthcoming to pastors advising them of this event and seeking their cooperation.

To defray costs, there will be a \$25 registration fee and \$75 will be deducted from all deacons' educational accounts whether they participate or not.

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of planning this Convocation, please contact Deacon Dan Welter by email (dcndan@rcn.com). The Diaconate Community of Chicago looks forward to your participation in this historic event.

Archdiocese gears up for Catholics Come Home Initiative

By Dave Brencic

A new evangelization initiative being launched during Advent by the Chicago Archdiocese in collaboration with the Dioceses of Rockford and Joliet will be looking to deacons to be the main contact persons in the parishes.

Catholics Come Home originated in the Phoenix Diocese in 2000. Over the years, the program has been refined to include professional commercials that set the stage and offer an invitation to Catholics who have left the church or become inactive.

Father Rich Hynes, director of the Department of Evangelization, Catechesis and Worship, and Nancy Polacek, coordinator for Catholics

(Continued on page 8)

In This Issue:

From the Editor	2
Views from the Vicar	3
Hope at Our Lady of Peace.....	4
Stritch Retreat House	5
Mandated reporter sessions.....	5
Diaconate Council notes	6
Obits & Community news.....	7
Family Ministries training	7
Ministerial Development Policy .	7
Ecumenical Events	9
Conflict workshops	9
Homiletic workshop	9
Peace & Justice update.....	10
Pilgrimages	10
Retirement policy.....	11
Rush needs Ministers of Care ..	11
Calendar	12



Congratulations! Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar of the Diaconate, greets well-wishers during his 40th anniversary celebration in June. More than 150 people attended the Mass of celebration held at St. Barbara Church and the party that followed.

Change is good?

This summer 37 parishes in the Chicago Archdiocese are undergoing personnel changes as new pastors and associate pastors are reassigned. In my own parish of St. Barbara in Brookfield, Father James P. Murphy is retiring as pastor after serving the last six years.

Throughout his time at St. Barbara, Fr. Murphy continually encouraged the four deacons in the parish. It's a wonderful thing to have a pastor you can talk with and feel like you will be supported in the various ministries and duties in and outside the parish.

During the last six years, I personally feel that I have really blossomed as a deacon and grown as a minister of the church because of

the freedom I was given by my pastor.

Unfortunately, not all of us deacons or wives of deacons are in that situation. Sometimes we struggle to find our niche in the parish or have a tenuous or antagonistic relationship with the pastor who really is the boss in the parish.

With all of the changes going on, many deacons will be starting from square one with new pastors. It will take time to adapt to different management styles, expectations and requirements. For some the situation will be a huge improvement, for others it may be a step back.

But whatever the situation, it is important that we as deacons feel that we are in a place where we can serve God and His people; where we

can fulfill our call to serve; where our talents can be appreciated and used.

If your parish is not such a place, consider transferring parishes. If that is not an option, there are many opportunities to serve elsewhere be it in a hospital, a nursing home, the jail, a homeless shelter or various other agencies and organizations in the archdiocese. Of course, prayer has to play a huge role in our discernment.

As deacons, we have all been called to serve. Whatever you do, don't abandon that calling. Don't let the fire to serve our Lord ever be extinguished.

Keep the fire burning,

Deacon Dave Brencic, editor

The Flame

A newsletter for the Chicago Diaconate community published six times a year: February, April, June, August, October, December
 Publisher: Fr. Michael Ahlstrom
 Editor: Dave Brencic
 Staff: Dennis Colgan, Dan Dietsch, Clare Faherty, Chick O'Leary

Submit Articles and photos to:

Office of the Diaconate
 Archdiocese of Chicago
 816 Marengo
 Forest Park, IL 60130
 Ph: (708) 366-8900
 Fax: (708) 366-8968

Deadline for submissions for the next issue is Sept. 15, 2009

Email:

DeaconNews@ArchChicago.org

The Flame is also viewable online at

www.deacons.archchicago.org

Printed by the generosity of J. S. Paluch Company, Franklin Park, Illinois. Publisher of bulletins, vocation and stewardship calendars, and of World Library Publications' assortment of music and liturgy resources.

¿Es el cambio algo bueno?

Este verano 37 parroquias de la Arquidiócesis de Chicago están pasando por cambios de personal mientras nuevos pastores y asociados están siendo re-asignados. En mi parroquia de Santa Bárbara en Brookfield, el pastor Padre James Murphy se está retirando como pastor, después de haberlo sido por seis años.

A través de este tiempo, el P. Murphy continuamente nos dio apoyo a los cuatro diáconos de la parroquia. Es una cosa maravillosa el tener un pastor con quien uno puede hablar y sentir que serás apoyado en los varios ministerios dentro y fuera de la parroquia.

Durante estos pasados seis años, siento que yo personalmente he madurado como diácono y crecido como ministro de la iglesia, por la libertad que recibí de mi pastor.

Desafortunadamente, no todos los diáconos y sus esposas están en igual situación. Algunas veces nos esforzamos en encontrar nuestro lugar en la parroquia o tenemos una relación con el pastor llena de problemas y antagonismo, siendo que él es el jefe de la parroquia.

Con todos los cambios que están sucediendo, muchos diáconos estarán

comenzando desde el principio con sus nuevos pastores. Tomará tiempo la adaptación a diferentes maneras de manejar la parroquia y de entender los nuevos requerimientos y expectativas. Para algunos, la situación será un cambio mejor, para otros, quizá un paso de retroceso.

Pero cualquiera que sea la situación, es importante que nosotros sintamos que como diáconos estamos donde debemos estar para servir a Dios y su gente; donde podamos responder a nuestra llamada de servicio; donde se utilizarán y apreciarán nuestros dones.

Si estás en una parroquia que no es ese lugar, considera el cambiarte a otro lugar. Si esto no es una opción, hay muchas oportunidades de servir en otro lugar, ya sea en un hospital, un asilo de ancianos, la cárcel, un albergue para personas sin hogar o varias otras agencias y organizaciones dentro de la arquidiócesis. Desde luego la oración tiene que jugar un importante lugar mientras disciernes que hacer.

Como diáconos, hemos sido llamados a servir. Cualquier cosa que decidas hacer, no abandones ese llamado. Nunca dejes que el fuego de servicio a nuestro Señor, se extinga.

Deja el fuego encendido,

Diácono Dave Brencic, editor

Views from the Vicar

Views from the Vicar

I hope all of you are enjoying my favorite season, summertime. Besides warmth and sunshine, the pace slows a little so we can re-create. In recent mailings, there have been a number of important announcements. I would like to review these. The biggest news is our upcoming Overnight Convocation at the O'Hare Intercontinental. This will be the most important event for the Diaconate community in many years. I know it will go a very long way toward solidifying who we are and what we are about. Please make sure you have reserved Jan. 23-24. All active deacons in Chicago are expected to be there. The women of the Diaconate community are highly urged to come.

The new retirement policy is a time for older deacons to reflect on their energy level and ability to minister. Many are blessed with reasonably good health and continue to be fully active. This is good. Others are still doing regular ministry, but at a slower pace and can become senior deacons. Those who are not able to do anything other than rare ministry can be fully retired. Some of our numbers need to swallow their pride and admit they are not operating at a pace they once did. If you want to talk about this, your Deanery Deacon Coordinator, Dennis Colgan, Enrique Alonso or myself are a phone call away. Those who are senior deacons will be receiving a simplified ministry evaluation and new agreement covering a three-year period. This is to assure accountability and a chance to dialogue with your pastor.

I sent a letter to all priests to explain our new retirement policy and to remind them of our approved stole fees. If your pastor still fails to offer you stole fees, please let me know so I can remind him of this obligation in justice. I am aware a number of you do not accept stole fees. While this generosity is very admirable, I would suggest you still accept them, and you could donate them right back. This way those who might need the money will not feel embarrassed to be compared to those who do not accept it.

We have a simplified policy for ongoing ministerial development. What is new is a much easier method for determining how many hours are needed. Also new is that retreats no longer count, but fewer hours are required to help compensate for that. The reason for separating out the retreats is

(Continued on page 11)

Reflexiones del Vicario

Espero que todos estén disfrutando de mi estación favorita, el verano. Además de calor y sol, el paso se hace un poco mas lento para que podamos re-crear. En unos recientes correos que mandé, hubieron muchos anuncios importantes. Quisiera revisarlos: La noticia más grande es la de nuestra reunión de dos días en el Hotel Intercontinental de O'Hare. Este será el evento más importante del diaconado en muchos años. Sé que solidificará quienes somos y que hacemos. Las mujeres del diaconado también están urgidas de asistir.



La nueva póliza de retiro, es un tiempo para que los diáconos mayores reflexionen acerca de su nivel de energía y su habilidad de servicio. Muchos tienen la bendición de gozar de una relativa buena salud y pueden continuar completamente activos y esto es

bueno. Otros están sirviendo regularmente, pero a un paso más lento y pueden elegir ser "senior deacon". Los que no pueden hacer mucho, salvo algún servicio rara vez, pueden estar completamente retirados. Algunos de nuestros diáconos tienen que tragarse el orgullo y admitir que no están funcionando de la misma manera que lo hacían antes. Si quieren hablar de esto pueden llamar a su coordinador de denario, a Dennis Colgan, Enrique Alonso o a mí. Los que son "senior deacons" recibirán un acuerdo ministerial simplificado, por tres años. Esto es para asegurar alguna responsabilidad y para que dialoguen con su pastor.

Mandé una carta a todos los sacerdotes para explicarles nuestra nueva póliza de retiro y recordarles nuestra ya aprobada póliza de estipendios. Si tu pastor todavía se niega a darte un estipendio, por favor déjame saber para que yo le recuerde de esta obligación de justicia. Sé que muchos de ustedes no aceptan estipendios; y mientras esta generosidad es muy

encomiable, quisiera recomendarles que los acepten y luego pueden donarlos de regreso. De esta manera los que puedan necesitar el dinero no se sentirán avergonzados de que los comparen con los que no los aceptan.

Hemos simplificado la póliza para educación continua con un método mucho más fácil de computar cuantas horas son necesarias para cada uno. Lo que es nuevo es que los retiros ya no contarán como horas de educación continua; pero para compensarlo, se necesitarán menos horas. La razón para esto es porque el retiro es algo espiritual y no teológico. Quiero recordarles que el derecho canónico exige un retiro anual. También les aconsejamos tener un guía espiritual.

He estado revisando con mucho cuidado los 115 diáconos inactivos que tenemos en nuestros libros. He estado trabajando en contactarlos para aclarar su situación. Algunos están regresando a su ministerio,

(Continued on page 10)

Lady of Peace Parish finds Hope

By Dave Brencic

Hope's on the Way, which has focused most of its energies on helping in the rebuilding efforts in New Orleans the past four years, took on another project closer to home this past summer.



Mike Curtin and Jack Herrmann, who is in the aspirancy program of the Deacon Formation Program, touch up walls and paint pipes in the basement chapel at Our Lady of Peace.

Four different teams ranging from a dozen to 21 people spent two weekends working at Our Lady of Peace Parish on Jeffrey Boulevard on the South Side of Chicago. The huge 90-year-old parish has struggled in recent years and maintenance on the buildings has not been kept up.

The OLP project was the third "local" mission for Hope's on the Way. Volunteers included deacons and lay people from all over the Chicago area. Six men in the Aspirancy phase of the Deacon Formation Program and their wives and/or families used the project toward their summer service project.

The project involved remodeling the basement chapel and two classrooms, which were cleaned, scraped and painted. One of the children's rooms received new floor tile.

In the chapel, the old drop ceiling

was torn down and the plaster ceiling was patched and painted. The walls also were brightened up and painted and the old woodwork and baseboard was either replaced or repaired. An entranceway also was cleaned up and painted. New lighting was installed throughout the chapel by Deacon Larry Chyba, an electrician.

Because of the additional volunteers, more work was included in the project. Two additional rooms and two different hallways were painted. A restroom off the chapel, which was in horrible shape, was gutted. A new cabinet, sink, faucet, lights and mirror will be installed at a later time.

The project used 19 gallons of paint and hundreds of volunteer hours.

"Our group Hope's on the Way recognizes that the deacon is 'servant first,'" said Deacon Sal Lema. "From my perspective, even though I spend a lot of time preparing and organizing, it is really great to get my hands dirty, to work with the aspirants, answer their questions about what it means to me to be a deacon and to practice what I preach. And at the end of the day, when I see the smiles of the tired workers as they look at their achievement, I see the heartbeat of Diaconal ministry, strong and vibrant within our community."

Fr. Mark Kalema, who has only been pastor at Our Lady of Peace since February, was overwhelmed with the transformation of the chapel and the other rooms.



Tom Reinke and Mike Curtin work on walls of the basement chapel at Our Lady of Peace.

"I don't know how I can explain it to you. It is wonderful work that they did," said Fr. Mark.

"The people came and looked there and everyone was speechless. It's been many, many years that there was nothing. They couldn't believe all that was done. To donate all that time and talent, and they did it with open hearts."

Fr. Mark said parishioners are hoping to have an opportunity to thank the volunteers later in the summer.

"People are amazed. They were left speechless," Fr. Mark said. "People are motivated so much. They want to meet these people who did it and shake their hands and thank them."



Some of the many volunteers who helped out at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Chicago.

News from Cardinal Stritch Retreat House

By Richard F. Hudzik

Greetings and blessings from Mundelein!

I offer a few items of news regarding Stritch, as well as the new retreat calendar.

First, we wish to extend a hearty welcome to the Class of 2009. Please join in retreats with the Chicago Diaconal community at Stritch. All members of the Diaconate can make reservations here at Stritch for preached retreats or private or directed retreats. All you need to do is call.

Second, as a reminder to everyone, your retreat allowances from the Diaconate Office operate on a fiscal year, which commences July 1 and concludes June 30. As you know, deacons and wives are each entitled to one retreat in the fiscal year (and not on a calendar-year basis). Needless to say, you may come here as often as you like, but only one retreat per fiscal year will be covered by the Diaconate Office.

Third, due to the cost-effectiveness of the system, please continue to consult your email accounts for announcements from Stritch. As you can appreciate, mailing over 600 envelopes to Chicago's deacons involves an expense of over \$260 — funds which could also be applied to other needs. Nevertheless, so that you are fully aware of what is happening, we will endeavor to send out at least one mailing per year. Please also remember that our Web site at www.stritchretreat.org has many details about the retreats and other information.

Fourth, listed below is the retreat calendar. There are still some outstanding invitations to retreat directors and, accordingly, I do not have all the retreat leader information as this issue of The Flame goes to press. Consult our Web site for updates. Be assured that it is our highest priority to locate retreat

leaders who will feed you well spiritually.

2009 schedule

Sept. 11-13 Deacons and wives. Deacon Bob Puhala, director of Deacon Formation, will be preaching on "Seeking and Finding God in the Midst of Daily Life."

Sept. 18-20 Deacons and wives. A Spanish language retreat.

Oct. 9-11 Deacons and wives. Fr. Mike Ahlstrom preaching.

Oct. 23-35 Deacons and wives. A Spanish language retreat.

Nov. 20-22 Deacons. Fr. Patrick Lagges preaching on "Advent As A Season of Hope." Until recently, Fr. Lagges was judicial vicar for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Presently, he is the director of the Hesburgh Center at Catholic Theological Union and chaplain at the University of Chicago's Calvert House.

2010 schedule

Jan. 15-17 Deacons and wives.

Feb. 12-14 Deacons. Fr. William Zavaski preaching on some of Paul's letters as a source for *lectio divina* and spiritual growth. Fr. Zavaski is pastor of St. James Parish in Arlington Heights.

Feb. 19-21 Deacons and wives. A Spanish language retreat.

April 16-18 Deacon wives and widows.

May 21-23 Deacons and wives. A Spanish language retreat.

June 4-6 Deacons and wives. Friar Bernard Kennedy, OFM, will be preaching.

Please let me hear from you about your needs. We will always try to make your stay with us both spiritually refreshing and rejuvenating. I value your input and your friendship.

Deacon Richard F. Hudzik is the director of Stritch Retreat House.

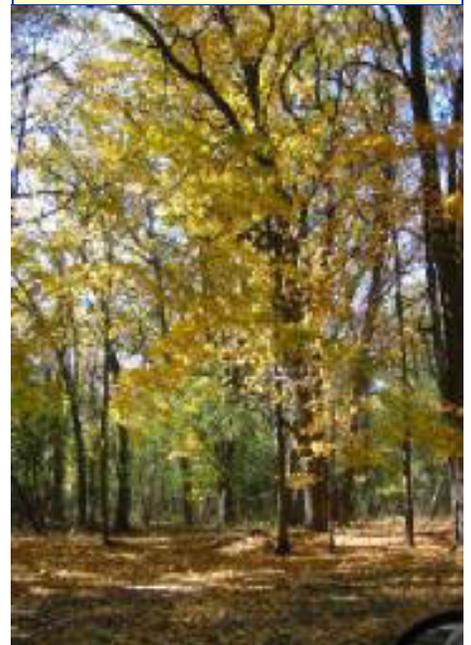
Mandated reporter sessions set

The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth is currently offering Mandated Reporter training to all those who are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

The dates include:
 -- Monday, Aug. 17: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Saint Ferdinand High School, 3131 N. Mason, Chicago.
 -- Saturday, Aug. 29: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at University St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary, 1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein.
 -- Monday, Sept. 28: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish, Koneig Center, 121 E. Maple Ave., Libertyville.
 -- Saturday, Dec. 12: 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at University of St. Mary of the Lake (formation candidates only) Mundelein Seminary, 1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein.

Pre-registration is required. No walk-ins. You must register at least seven days prior to the scheduled training. To register, email Regina Robinson at rrobinson@archchicago.org or call (312) 534-5254. Confirmation of registration is required.

Sessions will begin on time. Late arrivals will not be admitted. No children allowed.



Minutes of the Diaconate Council Meeting July 11, 2009

Special Presentation on Evangelization by Father Rich Hynes assisted by Nancy Polacek, focusing on the new Catholics Come Home initiative. Sample of the telemarketing video, scheduled for airing in late December and early January, were shown. Three separate videos are contemplated. Spanish versions will be available possibly also in Polish. This is contemplated to be the major evangelization effort in the archdiocese. Father Hynes outlined a proposed plan to integrate Diaconal participation.

Bill Stearns: Mutual AID Report: He is working on a form application/request because of the anticipated increase in requests for assistance. All requests are to be directed to Stearns with final approval, modifications or rejection to be made by the Executive Committee.

Council President Dave Egan: Letter of resignation for the Office of the Treasurer presented by Jim Schilz accepted. Chuck McFarlane named treasurer pro-tem until the spring 2010 elections. Motion to have an audit of books made and approved.

Dan Welter: promotion of the St. Stephens/Convocation combined "overnight" Jan. 23-24. Three separate hotels, considered for two nights, three-meal rate package. The O'Hare International was suggested and after a discussion the site was accepted. The hotel rate is \$89 per night (plus possible taxes). To defray costs, all participants shall pay a \$25 registration fee and \$75 will be deducted from all deacons' education accounts whether they participate or not.

-- Seeking participation of experienced deacons in the Emmaus program.

Associated Director Dennis Colgan: St. Lawrence Day scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 9, at St. Barbara Church in Brookfield to commemorate the class of 1983 and the new ordinands. No chairman named. Diaconate Office will coordinate Liturgy - arrange for proper awards. If no chairman is selected, the event may be canceled.

APC Bob Kuharic reported on the Council's meeting. Addressed the item of a Strategic Planning Committee, including Diaconal participation, as a whole to determine goals for the next five to seven years.

Chairman Report: Received letter from Father Salmon thanking the Diaconate for its assistance and participation in his ordination anniversary.

-- Mandated Reporter program: The last session was last month, but investigating possible development of an online program for the Archdiocese for the Diaconate. To date 363 deacons have completed the training.

-- A Program in Social Justice is to be developed possibly with APC to include all clergy with the purpose of identifying social justice issues.

Vicar's Report by Father Mike Ahlstrom:

-- Explanation of the newly proposed "retirement" policy.

-- Retreats no longer to be counted as hours for Ministerial Development.

The issue of approval and protocol concerning the deacon and new pastors was presented. Special effort will have to be taken to make

sure that the new pastor is aware of the deacon in his parish and his role in parish ministry. As to contacts and annual reports, the Diaconate office hopes to make "online" forms, contacts, etc. available.

-- An explanation was given relating the sheet outlining the role of the DDC in meeting with new pastors. A list of new pastors was provided. Also under the new canon law, inactive and "lost" clergy can be laicized without formal notice, whose whereabouts and contacts are unknown. A list is being prepared prior to any formal steps were made to locate the "lost" deacons.

Associate Director's Report by Dennis Colgan: Father Carmello Mendez of St. Eulalia, worked with a group in developing a prayer group, which now has made an offer to present "Credited Ministerial Education programs" for the Diaconate, e.g. Homeletics, Culturation etc. The first one, on preaching, is set for late August at St. Eulalia.

-- St. Francis day is set for Oct. 4, 2010. Bill Stearns is the Chairman/Coordinator.

Women's Group, Marge Colgan: Plans are in the process for the next meeting of the Women of the Diaconate community.

-- A South Side Luncheon was held for the Diaconate widows and one is planned for the North Side.

-- A motion for the council to underwrite costs was approved.

Sal Lema: Report on the 10th trip to New Orleans for Hope's on the Way. The 11th trip is scheduled Oct. 4th. The group has been working with others on a local rehab at Our Lady of Peace.

Next Diaconate Council meeting Sept. 12.

In Memoriam

Deacon Robert Odegard

Deacon Robert Odegard, '86, who ministered at St. Priscilla Parish in Chicago for 23 years, died July 6. He was 83.

During his years as a deacon, Robert was very involved with the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Men's Club and "whatever the pastor wanted him to do," said Deacon Fred Spitzzeri who served with him at St. Priscilla's. "He loved sports, he loved to be with people and work with charities. He was a really good guy."

Deacon Odegard was preceded in death by his wife Margaret and a granddaughter. He is survived by his children Mary, Christine, Denise, Stephen and Charles, and five grandchildren.

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who recently have gone to the Lord: Deacon Robert Odegard '85; Deacon Julius Frazier, '04; Deacon Armando Hernandez, '90; and Deacon Arturo Velasco, '72.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Julia Aguirre, Frank and Blanche DeVita, Jerry Kwasegroch, Joe McDonnell, Soledad Muñoz, Jim Deiters, Marvin Kocar, Roberto Figueroa, Sabino Sanchez, Ken Jenney, Judy Finnegan, Patricia Gniech, Josette Pezowicz, Angelo Cordoba, Edwin Martinez, Phil White, David Brezinski, Donald Palmer, Agnes Barrett, John Burt, José Uroza, Wilmer Rodriguez, Santos Soto, Jose Marrero, Jose Alvarez, Joaquin Varela, Luis Perez, John Simmons, Ronald Wiener, William Malloy, Cheryl Ann Gaca, daughter of Ron and Linda Morowczynski, Cheryl Becker, Theresa Winter and Mary Gronkiewicz.

Deacon Arturo Velasco

Ordained in 1972, retired Deacon Arturo Velasco died July 11. Deacon Velasco was a longtime member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Chicago. He was 86.

Deacon Jesus Zeferino Ochoa said people in the parish would often go to Deacon Velasco for advice and blessings. Ochoa said Deacon Velasco and his late wife, Conchita, had a special ministry to the poor in the Pilsen area.

"Widows, single women with children - he was able to identify those people and then organized intervention to help them. He singled out the need and got people to respond to that need," Ochoa said.

Over the years, Deacon Velasco was very involved with the Holy Name Society in the parish and organized the gala banquet fundraiser for 25 years. He also coordinated the quinceneras in the parish. Before his illness and age limited his driving, he often visited the elderly and the sick and brought them Holy Communion.

Ochoa said Deacon Velasco will be remembered as "a just man. He lived justly. His life was one of a just man."

Deacon Velasco is survived by two sons and several grandchildren.

Family Ministries offers training sessions

The Family Ministries Office will be sponsoring three training sessions in the coming months.

FOCCUS Coach Training: For all those who assist in marriage preparation to help engaged couples prepare for marriage with the FOCCUS Premarital Inventory. The session will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1123 Church St., Glenview.

PreCana Facilitators Training: Training for couples to facilitate the marriage preparation classes on an archdiocesan or parish level. Next training is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26, at Cardinal Meyer Center, 3525 S. Lake Park Ave., Chicago.

Annulment Support Ministry Training: For parish ministers and volunteers to learn to assist others to prepare an annulment case for the Chicago Tribunal. Next training is 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct., 24, at St. Patrick Church, 991 S. Waukegan Road, Lake Forest.

For more information, visit www.familyministries.org.

Policy on Ministerial Development

Here is the Ministerial Development Hours Policy for deacons, which was revised July 1.

The first three years after ordination 90 hours of ministerial development are required: 30 hours per year. Sixty of the hours must be completed in the mandatory Emmaus Program.

After the Emmaus Program is complete, 15 hours are required each year.

After age 60 and 10 years of ordination are completed, 10 hours are required each year.

After age 70 and 10 years of ordination are completed, five hours are required. Senior Deacons are also required to do 5 hours.

Canon law requires every deacon to do an annual retreat. Regular spiritual direction is highly encouraged.

Retreats and individual spiritual direction do not count for computing the hours of ongoing ministerial development.

Catholics Come Home

(Continued from page 1)

Come Home Chicago, presented an overview of the program to the Diaconate Council July 11. Prior to the presentation, Fr. Hynes and Polacek had met with Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate, and Deacon Bill Stearns, who has been heavily involved with evangelization efforts for the Diaconate community.

The four have outlined ideas of how deacons will be involved once the program is launched in late fall.

Catholics Come Home Chicago, which is being funded by all three dioceses because it is covering the Chicago metropolitan area, has three parts and consists of:

The Invitation, where people are invited to come home to the Catholic Church through prime-time television spots aired from Dec. 16 to Jan. 24.

The Welcome will involve parishes receiving people who express interest or make inquiries about returning to the practice of their faith or about becoming Catholic.

The Accompaniment will include walking with people as they return to the sacraments, helping individuals deepen their knowledge of the faith and then assisting them as they become re-integrated into the parish.

Polacek said Catholics Come Home will involve efforts on the parish and deanery levels. In trying to decide how to implement the program, Polacek said the role of the deacon caught the eye of organizers.

"The role of the deacon is to spread the Word of God," Polacek said. "It is a herald's place to begin with because of their prayerful presence in the parish and their role to send forth at the end of Mass."

Of 357 parishes in the archdiocese, 200 have assigned deacons. Polacek said those



numbers provide "the best distribution system" for the word to get out to the people and for coordination of the program.

Polacek said the program will soon send out letters to pastors asking them to have a deacon be the first contact person in the parish. She said the office has already been contacted by some deacons who want to participate in the effort.

In parishes with multiple deacons, Polacek said she is hoping deacons will step up and help out at parishes that don't have deacons.

A DVD with the commercials will be available to each parish and school in the early fall, before the December media campaign. Training sessions are also planned during the archdiocese's Festival of Faith Oct. 16-17. The idea is that parish and school staffs, and various parish leaders and organizations, will become familiar with Catholics Come Home Chicago.

Pastors will be asked to announce the initiative from the pulpit and bulletins the First and Second Sundays of Advent, and urge parishioners to encourage friends and family members to come home to the Catholic Church.

Other efforts will involve special training of parish secretarial and reception staff. Parish "prayer supporters," such as Eucharistic adorers and home-bound parishioners, also are encouraged.

Videos with the Catholics Come Home media spots will be shown in parishes before airing on TV. Once the media blitz begins, parishes will be asked to have informational materials available.

Polacek said deacons could help coordinate a parish's welcome table, which will have brochures, packets of information and a "guest book" for the Catholics who are returning to sign and list their contact information.

A deacon or a parish team member would then be responsible for following up with the individual.

Polacek said parishes also have had success with a "welcome dinner" where the newly returned Catholics are invited to learn about the parish and meet parishioners.

After the commercials have aired and into the winter, there will be resources available to individuals who need to "catch up" with information on the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and adult Confirmation. There also will be gatherings on the deanery level for those who are exploring the annulment process.

Polacek said her office will provide suggested guidelines for parishes to consider. From there, the pastor and parish coordinator can decide how much a parish will offer and participate.

She noted letters will soon be sent out to deacons detailing the program and looking for deacons who are willing to help at other parishes.

Fr. Ahlstrom said "there will be a lot of follow-up work" to do in launching the program.

One suggestion is to have a meeting for deacons in late summer to outline the program and gather ideas on how deacons can help implement things in the parish.

"Let's take the initiative and communicate with them (Catholics Come Home) and see what the needs are," Fr. Ahlstrom said. "My great hope is that it's a chance for the Chicago Diaconate community to work with the people responsible for Catholics Come Home. I see deacons as very critical to this effort."

Ecumenical events

Here are upcoming Ecumenical and Interreligious events:

Tuesday, Sept. 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.: 2009 Interfaith Iftar dinner at the Mosque Foundation, 7360 W. 93rd St., Bridgeview

Thursday, Oct. 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.: Solemn Vespers and reception. 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification Between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation and Affirmed by the World Methodist Council in 2006. Hosted by: Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., and Reverend Mark S. Hanson, Lutheran World Federation. Homilist: Most Reverend Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta. Special guest will be Reverend Dr. Ishmael Noko, general secretary, Lutheran World Federation. Held at Old St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 700 W. Adams St., Chicago.

Friday to Saturday, Oct. 16-17, Catholic Festival of Faith - Ecumenical and Interreligious

Homiletics workshops

St. Eulalia invites deacons to a Homiletics I Workshop consisting of 10 sessions this coming fall.

Classes will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays beginning Sept. 2. The presenters are to be announced.

A homiletics series in Spanish presented by Fr. Rodolfo Gaytan also will be offered. Those sessions will be from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursdays starting Aug. 27.

The cost for the workshops is \$100 and financial help is available

Workshops. On Friday at 2:25 p.m. - "What is Interreligious Learning" - Chicago Coalition for InterReligious Learning/Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. On Saturday at 12:45 p.m.: "Parish-Based Lutheran and Muslim Dialogue: Success Stories - Started and Sustained" presented by Deacon John Lorbach, Gail Radtke, Dalila Benameur, Andreatte Brachman, Sr. Joan McGuire and Sr. Mary Ellen Coombe.

Sunday to Monday, Nov. 8- 9: 2nd Hidden Treasures: Spiritual Wisdom through the Voices of Women in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Locations TBA.

Wednesday, Nov. 18, noon to 1 p.m. 23rd Annual Chicago Center for Cultural Connections Interfaith Thanksgiving Observance at First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St., Chicago.

For more information, call Archdiocese of Chicago Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs at (312) 534-5325 or visit www.archchicago.org/departments/ecumenical/eia.shtm

through the Diaconate Office.

In the workshops, learn skills that will help you:

- ... Prepare an outline
- ... Use constructive criticism for your own growth
- ... Recognize your strengths and weaknesses.

To register, call (708) 343-6120. Send your check to St. Eulalia Parish, 1851 S. 9th. Ave., Maywood, IL 60153.

E-mail steulalia@sbcglobal.net

Workshops on conflict resolution

A three-part workshop in conflict prevention/conflict resolution, sponsored by the Office of Conciliation and the Diaconate Office, will be held in September and October.

The workshop is geared for ordained, religious and lay ministry leaders and administrative staff.

The first session will be Sept. 12 on "The Spirituality of Conflict." Bill Nordenbrock, CPPS, will lead the program on the journey toward reconciliation in the presence of conflict.

On Oct. 3, the program will be "Polarity Management" given by Greg Gustin, OCS planning consultant. It will look at alternative and creative ways of seeing and managing ongoing and seemingly unsolvable problems in ministry

Oct. 10 will focus on "Getting to the Basics: The fundamental skills and practices of conflict resolution" presented by Cynthia Kolski.

The workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Archbishop Quigley Center 835 N. Rush, Chicago. Coffee will be available at 8:15 a.m.

Suggested donation is \$100 for the package of three sessions or \$50 per session. There will be a special staff rate (three or more) and a special deacon and wife rate. Please do not let the cost prevent you or your staff from attending. We will work out a cost that you can be comfortable with.

Workshops count toward ongoing formation hours for pastoral associates

Contact Ralph for more information at (312) 534-8291 or email rbonaccorsi@archchicago.org.

Peace & Justice update

The USCCB's Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development is launching two youth-focused initiatives to help in sharing Catholic social teaching.

The 2010 CCHD Multi-Media Youth Arts Contest is a tool for schools and parishes to engage youths in grades 7th to 12th in learning about the causes of poverty, Catholic social teaching and the work and witness of groups funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. All art forms are welcome, such as YouTube videos, music, painting, drama, writing, PowerPoint slideshows, etc. Lesson plans and activities for use with this contest are posted on the contest Web site (<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/contestmaterials.shtml>.)

-- Nominees are being sought for the Cardinal Bernadin New Leadership Award. The annual award is given to a Catholic young adult engaged in efforts to address the root causes of poverty and injustice in the United States. The award is presented at a reception at the November meeting of the bishops of the United States. Please consider nominating a young Catholic between the ages of 18-30. The deadline for nominations is July 31. The brochure and nomination form are available at (<http://www.usccb.org/cchd/youth.shtml#cardinal>.)

-- We are looking for people to serve on the Office for Peace and Justice CRS Committee. The next meeting is Sept. 2. For more information contact Adrienne Curry, program director CRS/ Justice Education, at (312) 534-8397 or acurry@archchicago.org; or Carol Smith, program assistant at (312) 534-3890 or csmith@archchicago.org.

-- Congratulations to the parishes and schools which participated in Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl Lenten program. For more information on how you can participate in ORB for next year, contact Curry by phone or email.

'The Passion' in Oberammergau

Come and join Deacon Rich Voytas, '06, and Deacon Dennis Robak, '06, Sept. 16-28, 2010, as they host a trip to Germany to see the "Passion Play" and attend Oktoberfest.

Other areas on the itinerary include Italy, Switzerland and Austria. Informational meetings are scheduled for August.

For more information, contact Voytas at (773) 586-3734 or Robak at (847) 491-9260.



Oberammergau
The Passion Play



Holy Land pilgrimage

Bishop Joseph N. Perry will lead a Holy Land Pilgrimage Nov. 27 to Dec. 5, 2009.

Cost for the 10-day trip will be \$2,949 per person, double occupancy. (Add \$539 for single occupancy.) It includes round-trip air fare from Chicago to Tel Aviv, Israel, four nights of accommodations in Jerusalem and three nights in Tiberias, an air-conditioned coach and English-speaking tour guide and more.

Registration form with \$600 deposit for each traveler required. Call Bishop Perry for a copy of the registration form and daily itinerary at (708) 772-3791.

Reflexiones del Vicario

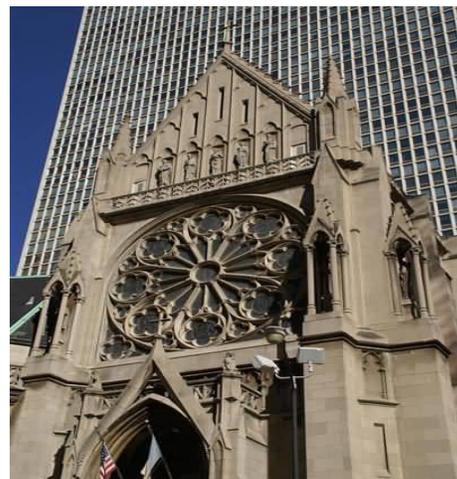
(Continued from page 3)

otros serán considerados como "retirados" Algunos serán laicizados, especialmente si no tienen intención de vivir el compromiso que hicieron al ordenarse. Inclusive hay muchos de los cuales que no hemos escuchado nada en años, ni siquiera sabemos donde viven. Si ustedes tienen información de algún diácono inactivo, por favor déjamelas saber. El Cardenal George quiere que yo aclare la situación de todos estos diáconos para no tener una lista tan grande de inactivos en nuestro archivo.

Las sesiones de "Mandated Reporter" están siendo ofrecidas nuevamente.. Comprendiendo que muchos de ustedes tienen dificultad en encontrar disponibilidad, hemos extendido la fecha límite para completar este entrenamiento. Seguimos esperando que haya una oportunidad de hacer este requisito por computadora.

Estoy muy agradecido a todos aquellos que asistieron a la celebración de mi 40avo aniversario o que me mandaron tarjetas de felicitación. Disfruté esta celebración aún mas que la de mis 25 años. La Comunidad Diaconal con su apoyo amoroso es lo que hace la diferencia. Muchas gracias!!!

Padre Michael Ahlstrom



Revised policy on retirement

When a deacon turns 70 years of age, he has three options:

Remain assigned and “active” as he is. There is no mandatory retirement age. The expectation is that if a deacon is in good health and circumstances permit him to stay active, then he will. However we encourage all deacons to honestly assess when they need to ease their pace and step down. The health of his wife is also taken into account.

He can become a “Senior Deacon” who is active while semiretired. After 10 years of active ministry and reaching the age of 70, a deacon may request the status of “Senior Deacon.” The senior deacon will remain attached to the parish where he last served and retain the faculties of a deacon in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The following expectations are to be met:

... Complete a simple account of what ministry the deacon will regularly do and an appraisal of that ministry once every three years.

... There will be an expectation of five hours of ministry each month (in addition to liturgical ministry), unless health conditions or travel prevent this in a given month.

... The deacon will participate in five hours of ongoing ministerial development each year.

The annual parish support for the deacon will be reduced by 25% of what is current for a fully active deacon (\$450 vs. \$600 for 2009-2010).

The final status of “retired” is for those who are completely inactive, usually due to health. Fully retired deacons have no assignment, no requirements and no parish support will be requested, other than the cost of an annual retreat from the last parish where the deacon was assigned. Such deacons do not have archdiocesan faculties, but may do occasional ministry with the permission of the vicar and the pastor where the ministry will take place. To receive that permission, the deacon must be current with archdiocesan requirements for public ministry. (Virtus Training, Code of Conduct, criminal background checks, etc.)

This policy has been revised as of July 1.

Rush Center seeks Ministers of Care

Ministers of Care volunteers are needed at Rush University Medical Center.

Rush University Medical Center, a 650-bed teaching hospital, serves between 125 and 225 Catholic patients each day. We are in need of Ministers of Care due to the retirement of several of our current ministers.

The medical center is located at the junction of the Eisenhower Expressway and Ashland Avenue in the West Loop. Ministers of Care are provided with free parking. The only commitment required is for a couple of hours each month anytime between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Free TB tests and hospital orientation are provided.

If you have a couple of hours available to connect our patients to the larger Catholic community, contact Deacon Roger Vandervest at (312) 942-4379 or (312) 942-5571 or roger_vandervest@rush.edu.

Views from the Vicar

(Continued from page 3)

because this is spiritual, not theological-pastoral development. I remind you canon law demands an annual retreat. Spiritual direction is very highly encouraged.

I have been carefully reviewing the 115 inactive deacons we have on our books. I have been working at contacting them to clarify their situation. A few of these are happily returning to ministry. Others will be formally retired. Some should be laicized, especially if they have no intention of living out the commitment they made at ordination. Quite a few have not been heard from for years. We do not even know where they live. If you have any information on an

inactive deacon please let me know. Cardinal George would like me to clarify their status so we will no longer have this big inactive file.

Mandated Reporter Training sessions are again being offered. Because there is difficulty in everyone being accommodated, the deadline for completion has been extended. We are still hoping there will be a way this can done online.

I am very grateful for all who came to celebrate my 40th Anniversary or sent me best wishes. I enjoyed this even more than my silver jubilee. The Diaconate community with its loving support is what makes the difference! Thank you!!!

Father Michael Ahlstrom



Access The Flame
online at
deacons.archchicago.org

Archdiocese of Chicago
Office of the Diaconate
816 Marengo
Forest Park, IL 60130

August

- 9 St. Lawrence Day Mass and Picnic
- 17 Mandated Reporter training at Saint Ferdinand High School, 3131 N. Mason, Chicago.
- 29 Mandated Reporter training at University St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary

September

- 1 2009 Interfaith Iftar dinner at the Mosque Foundation
- 11-13 Deacons and wives retreat
- 12 Conflict prevention/conflict resolution workshop
- 18-20 Deacon and wives Spanish retreat
- 28 Mandated Reporter training at St. Joseph Parish, Koneig Center in Libertyville.

October

- 1 Solemn Vespers and reception. 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification Between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation.
- 3 Conflict prevention/conflict resolution workshop
- 4 St. Francis Day Celebration at Elmcrest Banquets
- 9-11 Deacons and wives retreat
- 10 Conflict prevention/conflict resolution workshop
- 16-17 Catholic Festival of Faith - Ecumenical and Interreligious Workshops.
- 23-25 Deacons and wives Spanish retreat

Numbers to know:

Office of the Diaconate
816 Marengo Ave.
Forest Park, Ill. 60130
(708) 366-8900; fax (708) 366-8968

Father Michael Ahlstrom,
Vicar for the
Diaconate Community
email:
mahlstrom@archchicago.org

Dcn. Dennis Colgan,
Assoc. Director
Email:
dcolgan@archchicago.org

The Chicago Deacons Web
site:
deacons.archchicago.org