



THE FLAME

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Assignment of deacons: A time for change

By Deacon Daniel G. Welter

“Here we go again ... change for change’s sake.”

“Why can’t they leave us alone? Why fix what ain’t broke?”

“But I don’t wanna go!!”

All of these are reactions that a deacon - or his spouse - might have to the deacon transfer policy as announced in the June 2010 memorandum from Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate community.

Change, and the disruption it inevitably brings, is never easy. However, change is a part of life and is necessary if we are to grow

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Bishop John Manz gave the keynote address at the annual St. Stephen Symposium in October.

Deacons challenged on immigration issue

By Deacon Dave Brencic

A continuing sluggish economy has pushed immigration reform out of the limelight of national issues, said Auxiliary Bishop John Manz in his keynote address during the St. Stephen Symposium XIV held in October.

This year’s symposium took on a different look with a keynote address followed by workshops presented by deacons. The symposium only drew 181 people, which is far below past symposiums.

In his address, Bishop Manz said he is not surprised about the lack of emphasis on immigration reform, and the situation poses a challenge for the Church.

“It’s the economics of

immigration reform,” Bishop Manz said. “I’m not surprised that immigration is on the back burner. Everything is about the economy right now and that’s understandable.”

The lack of movement has frustrated some people.

“People are a little tired of it. It’s been going on and there has been a lot of talking about it, but nothing has really happened,” the bishop said.

He noted that deacons, as leaders in the parish, play an important role in informing people about the issue and the Church’s teachings on social justice.

“It’s a challenge for the Diaconate community,” Bishop Manz said. “How do we convince the people in the pews that this is a moral issue?”

The bishop said he has traveled throughout the country and has talked with experts and people in border towns and on the front lines. He noted that the border areas have always been places where the vulnerable are preyed upon and are often caught up in the webs of drugs and prostitution. Then there are “the thousands of people who have died in the deserts of Arizona” trying to enter the country.

The bishop challenged deacons to evaluate their own feelings about the issue and learn about the various aspects of immigration reform. “We have to educate ourselves and look at this issue and look at our own feelings about it.”

There is a variety of sources and documents on immigration reform, especially on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Quiet, please

I don't know about you, but I often find the season of Advent a struggle.

In my heart, I know I need to find the time for peace and prayer and quiet.

That's a little hard to do when we are constantly bombarded and surrounded by the commercialism of the season. It's also difficult to do as ministers of the Church. There are feast days to celebrate, Christmas pageants to attend, reconciliation services and this year the triple whammy of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Feast of the Holy Family on Friday, Saturday and Sunday!

And that doesn't count family time, home obligations and other holiday festivities.

It all seems like everything in the world is conspiring to squeeze the

silence, the peace, the real reason for the season out of my life. Yet that is what my heart yearns for.

I wake up at 5:30 every morning for work and part of my routine before I leave for the office is to spend about 20 minutes in prayer. During my prayer time last Advent, I would light the candles, sit there in silence staring at the flickering flame and bask in the presence of the Lord.

I couldn't ask for a better way to start my day. I couldn't ask for a better way to prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace into my life.

On another matter, thank God the election is in our collective rear-view mirror, at least for a few months. It's so sad to hear how many millions of dollars was spent on political advertising - 99 percent of it negative. Just think how much good that money could have been used for. It's yet another reason why we

have to pray for our nation, those in office and our political leaders, regardless of the party. I also think if the opportunity ever arises and we personally meet candidates running for office, we should stress to them to focus on the issues and stop the negativity. Who knows maybe some day the politicians may finally get the message.

One last point: we've heard a few comments about the Flame being late and the information outdated. Believe me the delays we often encounter in putting out each issue are extremely frustrating. A part of the lag time is due to the U.S. Postal Service, which seems to send each issue via China. The Diaconate Office will put an email out when the next issue is posted online for those of you who want your news a little more timely.

Keep the fire burning,
Deacon Dave Brencic, editor

The Flame

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Silencio, por favor

Yo no sé ustedes, pero yo, muy a menudo encuentro esta temporada de Adviento como una lucha.

Tengo que encontrar en mi corazón tiempo para tener paz, oraciones y tranquilidad.

Esto es difícil de hacer cuando estamos constantemente bombardeados y envueltos en el comercialismo de la temporada. Es también difícil de hacerlo como ministros de la Iglesia. Hay días de fiesta que celebrar, programas de Navidad que atender, servicios de reconciliación y este año, Noche Buena, Navidad y la fiesta de la Sagrada Familia, el viernes, sábado y domingo!

Y esto sin contar el tiempo con la familia, obligaciones del hogar y días de fiesta.

Parece como si todo el mundo estuviese conspirando en apretujar fuera de nuestra vida, el silencio y la paz, la razón real de esta temporada navideña. Sin embargo, eso es lo que mi corazón anhela.

Yo me despierto todas las mañanas para ir al trabajo a las 5:30 a.m. y parte de mi rutina antes de salir, es estar en oración por unos 20 minutos. Durante mi tiempo de oración el Adviento pasado, prendí velas, y me sentaba en silencio contemplando sus llamas y me envolvía en la presencia del Señor.

No podía pedir una manera mejor de

comenzar mi día. No podía pedir por una mejor manera de dar la bienvenida a mi vida al Príncipe de Paz.

Pasando a otro asunto, gracias a Dios que ya tenemos a las elecciones en el espejo de atrás de nuestros carros, por lo menos por algunos meses. Es tan triste escuchar cuantos millones de dólares de invirtieron en publicidad política, - y 99% de ella, negativa. Solo piensen cuanto bien se pudiera haber hecho con ese dinero. Está es otra razón por la que tenemos que rezar por nuestra nación, los que están en el gobierno y nuestros líderes políticos, de cualquier partido que sean. También pienso que si hubiera una oportunidad de conocer a candidatos que están corriendo por algún cargo, deberíamos decirles que se enfoquen en los hechos y paren la negatividad. Quien sabe, talvez los políticos algún día escuchen y reciban el mensaje.

Un último punto: hemos escuchado comentarios de que *The Flame* llega tarde y que su información está ya pasada. Créanme, los problemas que encontramos en tratar de sacar cada boletín son extremadamente frustrantes.. Parte del problema también es el correo, que parece que mandara los boletines vía la China. La Oficina Diaconal mandará un correo electrónico cuando el próximo boletín esté en nuestra red, para que el que quiera recibir las noticias más rápido. Mantengan el fuego encendido,

Díacono Dave Brencic, editor

Views from the Vicar

What are you doing for Advent?

For too many of us this is just a hectic month with all that goes into Christmas both in our family and at our parish. Advent is supposed to be a time of quiet waiting. It usually is just the opposite. I hope you will steal away some time for quiet prayer. Maybe sit with Mary and reflect on her awaiting the birth of her son. What are you hoping he will bring you in the new year? This would be a good time to use *Lectio Divina* as a quiet way to pray. The four steps (read – think– talk – sit) are a way to quietly slow down and get into the spirit of Advent.

Maybe take Mary’s Canticle that we use at our daily Evening Prayer. Read it slowly. Think about what it is saying to you. Talk to our Lord (or his mother) and listen to what you

hear being said to you. Most importantly take a good amount of time to just sit in silence with no images or words and allow what you have heard, meditated on and prayed about to sink in.

Reading, meditating and talking with God are relatively easy. The fourth step of contemplation is more of a challenge because you need to be completely still. It is in this quiet fourth step of *Lectio* that God goes to work transforming you and you do not even sense it. May a peaceful and prayerful Advent prepare you for a joyous Christmas!

When was the last time you made a retreat? While most of you are very faithful, far too many in our community are just too busy to take the time off! Besides hurting ourselves, violating Canon Law and not practicing what we preach, we are hurting the people we serve.

They deserve to have us at our spiritual best. This only happens if we take time for a retreat. Like Advent it is a time to slow down and let God go to work. While some deacons and wives want every minute of a retreat to be filled with activity, I prefer lots of quiet time to let God work on us. While he sometimes does this in a talk or an activity, more often it happens when we least expect in the quiet moments of a retreat. If it has been a while sign up today!

This time next year we will be experiencing our first liturgies with the new translation of the Mass. This will be the most radical shift in our liturgy in over 45 years. It will emphasize the transcendence and mystery of God rather than his closeness and accessibility. It will be to language what a soaring gothic cathedral is in architecture

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Reflexiones del Vicario



¿Qué estás haciendo para Adviento? Para muchos de nosotros este es un mes muy ajetreado que nos lleva a Navidad, ya sea con nuestra familia o nuestra

parroquia. Adviento supuestamente debe ser un tiempo de una espera tranquila, y usualmente es lo contrario. Espero que Uds. roben algún tiempo para orar con tranquilidad. Tal vez siéntense con María para reflexionar en la espera del nacimiento de su hijo. ¿Qué es lo que esperas que Él te traiga en el Año Nuevo? Este es un buen tiempo para usar *Lectio Divina* como una manera de orar con tranquilidad. Los cuatro pasos (lee-piensa-habla-prestar atención) son una manera de hacer una pausa y involucrarse en el espíritu de Adviento. Tal vez puedes usar el cántico a María que usamos en nuestras oraciones vespertinas. Léanlo despacito y piensen en lo que les dice. Hablen con el Señor (o su Madre) y escuchen lo que les dicen. Lo más importante es que tomen

suficiente tiempo para sentarse en silencio sin imágenes ni palabras y permitan que les llegue lo que han escuchado, mediten y oren sobre ello para que les llegue hondo. Leer, meditar y hablar con Dios es relativamente fácil. El cuarto paso de contemplación es un desafío más grande, porque tienes que estar en completo silencio. Es este cuarto paso del *Lectio* es en el que Dios trabaja para transformarnos sin que siquiera lo notemos. ¡Que un Adviento lleno de paz y oración nos prepare para una gloriosa Navidad!

¿Cuándo ha sido la última vez que has hecho un retiro? Mientras que algunos de ustedes lo hacen fielmente, muchos más, en nuestra comunidad, están muy ocupados para tomar un tiempo libre! Además de lastimarse, violar el Derecho Canónico y no practicar lo que predicamos, estamos lastimando a las personas que debemos servir! Ellos merecen tenernos en lo mejor de nuestra espiritualidad, y esto solo ocurre si tomamos el tiempo para asistir a un retiro. Es como el Adviento, un tiempo para estar tranquilos y dejar que Dios trabaje.

Mientras que algunos diáconos y sus esposas quieren que cada hora de su retiro esté lleno de actividades, yo prefiero tener mucho tiempo libre para dejar que Dios trabaje en nosotros. Mientras que Él algunas veces hace su trabajo a través de una charla o una actividad, más a menudo esto pasa cuando menos lo esperamos durante momentos libres dentro de nuestro retiro. Si hace mucho que no hiciste un retiro, inscríbete hoy para hacerlo!

Dentro de un año en este tiempo, estaremos experimentando nuestras primeras liturgias con la nueva traducción de nuestra Misa. Este será el cambio más radical en nuestra liturgia en más de cuarenta y cinco años. Enfatizará la trascendencia y misterio de Dios, en vez de su cercanía y accesibilidad. Será para el lenguaje lo que una sublime catedral gótica es en arquitectura, comparada con una simple iglesia con sus bancos alrededor del altar para que en la asamblea se vean unos a otros. En

(Continued on page 10)



Deacon Ed Gronkiewicz, right, receives the St. Francis Day Award from Bill Stearns, president of the Diaconate Council, Associate Director Dennis Colgan and Fr. Mike Ahlstrom.

St. Francis Day dinner

This year's St. Francis Day dinner raised \$24,000 for the Diaconate Council, which in turn uses the money for those in the Diaconate community in times of need and for further education.

At the dinner, Deacon Ed Gronkiewicz accepted the St. Francis Day Award for his work, service and contributions to the Diaconate community. Gronkiewicz has held a variety of offices on the Diaconate Council, including chairman and secretary. In presenting the award, Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar, said Gronkiewicz is "an unsung hero. He doesn't like the limelight, but he has done a lot for our community."

Fr. Mike described the dinner as "a great event."

"It was a wonderful gathering of our community, priests and friends," Fr. Mike said. "We owe our gratitude to Ron Morowczynski and Andy Beierwaltes and others who assisted them in making this a successful event."

Preaching workshop to focus on Lent

Fr. Richard N. Fragomeni will share his homiletics expertise with a special preaching workshop entitled "Preaching the Lenten and Easter Cycle 2011" on Saturday, Jan. 15.



The workshop will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii, 1224 W. Lexington St., in Chicago. Fr. Fragomeni will offer his insights into how to approach homilies during the upcoming Lenten season.

Continuing education hours can be earned with the workshop. The cost is \$15 and lunch will be served. Call the Diaconate Office at (708) 366-8900 to make your reservation. Space is limited.

Postage stamps needed for Kolbe House

By Deacon Larry Chyba

Kolbe House, which ministers to those in Cook County Jail and their families has a special need this holiday season. In order to send out 5,500 Christmas cards, Kolbe House is hoping for stamps or donations to purchase the required amount of postage. Your gift is appreciated. Please send your gift of stamps to:

Deacon Pablo Perez
c/o Kolbe House
2434 S. California Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608-4604

It's a known fact that with our struggling economy, most of us have had to crank up even more energy to minister to the incarcerated, the widowed, the unemployed, the lonely, the sick, the burnt out and the stressed out.

As a result, are we willing to go back to the days of the very first Christmas when times were simple, but difficult, too? When the greatest gift was the birth of our Lord and Savior, let us remember to share the Christmas story especially with those we minister to. After all, the message is indeed the one with the happiest ending of all ... that is out of this world! Don't forget to say Merry Christmas and tell the people why!





**Phoebe's
Corner**

**Women of Diaconate
community share call
to ministry**

By Helene Albano

I'm writing this month to inform the women of the Diaconate community about our ongoing efforts to address the needs and shared concerns of our membership. After last January's Diaconate Convocation, a small group of interested women from our community began meeting to share, discuss and seek God's will for future shared ministry/action.

As members of the largest Diaconate community in the Church, we feel it is important to gather both for mutual support and to provide an opportunity for

collective outreach that extends beyond our homes and parish boundaries.

We have met on three separate occasions, sharing about our rich history as a community; our successes and challenges in ministry; and our desire to continue gathering in a more effective and organized way. Additionally, some of us gathered to attend an extremely informative workshop on domestic violence presented by Interfaith Parish Support Services in Schaumburg.

During our last meeting in November, we committed to meeting on a monthly basis in order to sharpen the focus of our gatherings. We also agreed to work on developing a clearer purpose and vision, to strengthen our organization and membership and to make plans for more active outreach in the new year. We have scheduled three additional Wednesday meetings at 7 p.m. on

Dec. 15, Jan. 12 and Feb. 9. The December meeting will be at Mater Christi Parish's library in the former school, 2400 S. 10th Ave., North Riverside. The January and February meetings will be at St. Bernadine's in Forest Park.

Some of the areas we will be working on include: development of a mission/vision statement; personal contact with the women of our community to invite their participation/support, to explain some of our goals and objectives, and to listen to their needs; and organizing for networking, support and shared outreach and ministry.

Your input and perspective are both sought and valued as we continue to gather and organize to more effectively respond to Jesus' call. If you are interested in helping to create and support the ongoing mission and outreach of the women of the Diaconate community, please email either:

Helene Albano at ladyteardrop@comcast.net or Sue Szarek at DOGS34ME@comcast.net.

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Bishop Joseph Perry enlists a helper to draw the winning tickets at the Zacchaeus House benefit luncheon, recently hosted by St. Matthew Parish in Schaumburg.

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Stritch Retreat House update

By Deacon Richard F. Hudzik

Certainly, you have heard the line "If you want to make God smile, tell him your plans." Perhaps that could be modified to say, "If you want to make God smile, tell him your construction plans – especially those in a 60-year-old building."

As I prepare this article, we at Stritch are inching forward with upgrading the library and dining room. We will see how much we can accomplish, once we deal with those pipes no one knew were buried in a column we intended to take out. At a minimum, when you return after the first of the year, you will see some new lighting, flooring and tile in both the library and dining room. Come by and see how it looks. I will also post some photos as we progress on the website at www.stritchretreat.org.

Regardless of how all that turns out, we will be open for business in early January. Here is the schedule of the remaining Stritch-sponsored retreats. Sign up today.

Jan. 14-16: Deacons and wives (Fr. Kevin Scaif, C.Pp.S.)

Feb. 11-13: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)

Feb. 18-20: Deacons (Fr. Kurt Boras)

April 1-3: Deacons and wives (Dr. Kate Wiskus, D.Min.)

May 20-22: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)

Please accept my continual reminder that you are welcome here for your own private stays for retreat and renewal. Also, if you feel it would be helpful to give voice to what you are praying, certainly, I would be honored to sit with you and pray together. Truly, it would be a gift to me to help in that way. Also, remember that, as the archdiocese's retreat house, we are most interested in hosting your parish groups – committees, staffs, prayer groups, planning sessions. An increasing number of parishes are availing themselves of this opportunity.

Come away by yourself. *Venite seorsum.*

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

News from Peace and Justice office

Here is an update from the Office for Peace and Justice for the Archdiocese of Chicago of upcoming activities, events and news.

Hundreds of supporters and the Illinois Coalition To Abolish The Death Penalty attended a rally and lobby day at the Illinois Capitol in Springfield to encourage legislators to vote yes to repeal the death penalty in Illinois.

The 2011 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering will be held in Washington, D.C., from Sunday, Feb. 3 to Wednesday, Feb. 16. The gathering will feature 19 leading Catholic national organizations exploring common issues and concerns of global and domestic policy on human life, justice and peace that challenge our nation and world. Early-bird registration will be accepted through Dec. 17.

Participants must make their own hotel reservations, call (888) 444-6664 and use the group discount code 12400609632 or go online to Omni Shoreham Hotel. Contact CSMG Reservations with questions at csmg@usccb.org or call (877) 247-0449. More information on the gathering and how to register can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/jphd/csmg/2010/docs/savethedate2011.pdf>.

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention for November is: That victims of drugs or of other dependence may, thanks to the support of the Christian community, find in the power of our Saving God strength for a radical life-change.

St. Jerome celebration

St. Jerome Parish in Chicago enjoyed a cool crisp day as it celebrated its St. Jerome Feast Day Festival Oct. 3, led by Pastor Fr. Jeremy Thomas and Associate Pastor Fr. Luis Valerio. The day was preceded by the third annual novena to St. Jerome, a Mananita at 6 a.m. on Sunday Oct. 11, a bilingual Spanish/English liturgy with commissioning of youth leaders, followed by a potluck reception and entertainment provided by parishioners and committees of St. Jerome Parish. The deacons of the parish, Eliseo



Ramos, Francisco Marin, Frits Jean-Pierre and Ray Ward provided tacos, decorations and assisted with the liturgy.

How to get young Catholics home

By Deacon Gene LaBelle

Catholics today live in a society fractured by mass movement. The weave which once held local community institutions together has unraveled. However, unlike local community institutions, the Catholic Church, being ubiquitous, has the ability to be a sort of underground railroad linking its membership together. This fact, I believe, needs new vision and a fresh approach. I believe the Church can find a way to become more relevant in the lives of its increasingly mobile members.

To do this, the Church could focus its programs and message so as to become more integrated into the multifaceted lives of young people. Local churches must view their young members as temporary, and must look to assist them on their journeys

from place to place, and from parish to parish. It seems not enough for local churches to merely call back its young people. The Church must weave itself into their lives so that relocation is no longer such a disintegrating factor in the lives of young Catholics.

Examples of things to consider might be day care for working mothers, help with résumés, job referral services, letters of introduction to new parishes when people move, prearranged contact with young Catholics to help them settle into their new communities and new parishes, welcoming committees, house-warming parties and some follow-up from the former parish family.

These types of services tie



the Church to the larger Catholic community, and ease the burden of establishing new relationships following a move. We have to begin to envision ourselves as an itinerant Church because that is what we have become. If such an approach could be adopted across the country, we might see our pews begin to fill up again. Our young people are the future of the American Church. We must search for new ways to keep them coming back. In short, we must help them to see the Church as a necessary link in their lives. We must develop new approaches to make this happen.

Deacons challenged on immigration issue

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website, uscgb.org.

Bishop Manz said among the issues the Catholic Church is promoting is protection of human rights; protection of families, especially the threat of separating parents and children; and a path toward citizenship, which could take seven to eight years.

Following the keynote address, a variety of workshops was held, with topics ranging from the deacon and taxes, to comparative religions, to preaching, to domestic abuse, to ministering to the mentally disadvantaged, to dealing with

changes and transfers.

“The St. Stephen Symposium was unique this year because all the workshops were done by members of our own community. Feedback on both Bishop Manz’s keynote presentation on immigration reform and the workshops was very positive,” said Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate.

“I am grateful for Sal Lema who coordinated this event. However, I was very disappointed in the numbers attending. After having a record turnout at last January’s



Fr. Mike Ahlstrom greets deacons during the registration and continental breakfast at the St. Stephen’s symposium.

Convocation, this was the lowest attended event we have ever had! Those who did not come missed something very good.”

Diaconate Council Notes November 13, 2010

Treasurer's report, Charles

McFarland: As of Aug. 31, the bank balance was \$40,461.89. Since then credits and disbursements to the account leave a current balance of \$45,770.31 as of Oct. 31. Archdiocesan Bank CD values as of Oct. 29: \$42,070.05 in a 90-day CD at 1% interest, \$96,832.56 in a 12-month CD at 1.70% interest. The Saint Francis Day Dinner Income and Expense Statement: Total Income \$36,210, expenses \$12,152.41, and net profit was \$24,057.

\$667 was received for memorials from those using the Deacon Memorial Cards during the period Jan. 1 through Oct. 31. Treasurer McFarland has asked that an ad for deacon memorials be placed in subsequent issues of the Flame. Memorial cards should also be available at all deacon events.

Deacon Bob Puhala response to our letter, Sal Lema: Per the council's request, Secretary Sal Lema sent a letter on behalf of the council to the DFP Director, Deacon Bob Puhala. Sal read both the letter and the response. Fr. Mike Ahlstrom stated that he would initiate a conversation with Fr. Thomas Baima about Bob's letter referring to credits given. He would also pursue the establishment of an advisory board for the Diaconate Formation Program. Marge Colgan of the women of the Diaconate reported that the women who met recently felt that the directive was a dead issue. A Hispanic council member stated that the DFP does not share with the Spanish Program at all.

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Tony Coco: Representative Coco presented four questions that the cardinal is asking about the next four months. Council members who have concrete ideas are asked to send their ideas to Rita Kattner or Barbara Croker of the archdiocesan office for Councils.

Chairman Report William

Stearns: Chairman Stearns reported that the Policy and Procedures manual was going along well. The members of the committee consisting of Father Mike, Denis Colgan, Dan Welter and Bill Stearns continue to meet. They hope to have the book completed by Christmas.

Chairman Stearns reported that this St. Francis Day Dinner netted \$1,900 less in profit than previous years. The basket raffle did better than the live auction. Fr. Mike added that since the majority of deacons do not have disposable income, the live auction did not do as well. Sal Lema expressed his thanks to Ron Morowczynski, Andy Beierwaltes and Kevin Hill for their work. Next year, Andy Beierwaltes will chair and Ron Morowczynski will assist him. If anyone is interested in helping they should contact either Andy or Ron.

Mutual Aid assistance: The Executive Council raised the mutual aid amount per occurrence to \$1,000 from \$500.

Chairman Stearns reviewed new guidelines on how the Mutual Aid Fund will be administered in the future. Vice Chairman George Kashmar will now have the responsibility of contacting the person asking for request, gathering the information needed and then sharing that information with the executive committee, which will make the final decision.

Considerations for ministry: Chairman Stearns brought up three questions currently in the diaconal policy and procedures manual:

Distance and travel time shall be considered in reassignment.

As a norm, deacons should have one weekend each month free of

any parish responsibilities, including liturgical service. This weekend should be utilized in a Sabbath manner; worship with one's family, attending to family relationships and activities, spiritual renewal, rest and recreation.

If a deacon is assigned to a parish other than that in which his family worships, he should not be engaged in the liturgical ministry of that parish except for special occasions or by individual invitation.

By a show of hands, members favored these statements but wished item B referring to one weekend off of ministry each month to be listed as a *suggested* element rather than a *normative*.

Chemical dependency: Chairman Stearns stated that a chemical dependency assistance program is needed. He is looking for names within our community (deacons or wives) of qualified clinicians who can be called upon to help when needed.

Personnel Board, Dan Welter, chairman: Dan Welter discussed the progress made with the personnel board concerning the reassignment process. Presently, the reassignment of deacons happens after a deacon has served 10 years in an assignment as long as the deacon is under 60 years of age. That formula greatly limits the number of deacons available. Welter led a discussion showing comparisons on raising the age requirement from 60 to 63 or 65 years of age. With a show of hands, the council favored the age limit being raised to 65.

Vicar's Report, Fr. Mike

Ahlstrom: Fr. Mike accepted the resignation of John Lucas as VDC for Vicariate I.

Fr. Mike called on VDC's and

Diaconate Council Notes November 13, 2010

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DDC's to contact any new pastors in their deaneries. DDC's are to call each deacon every six months. He asked for a brief report on how these contacts went.

Fr. Mike, along with Dan Welter, Carol Walters, (director of lay ecclesial ministers) have been collaborating on a program to enlighten international priests who are now becoming pastors or parish administrators and who have not had experience with deacons. They recently had a meeting with Cardinal George who approved of their efforts.

The recent St. Stephen Symposium had the worst turnout ever. It was thought that having presenters from the Diaconate community would garner a big draw. That was not the case. On March 12, there will be the one-day Convocation at Concordia. The topic will be the translation of the new Roman Missal. Fr. Mike expects all deacons to be present for this event. In January, preparations will begin for the 2012 overnight convocation. It has been suggested that Matthew Kelly give the keynote.

On November 10, Fr. Mike met with the black deacons and their wives. One issue that was discussed is the need for more black men to enter into formation.

Report from Associate Director Dennis Colgan:

The ID system at the symposium didn't work as intended. IDs can be retaken at the next event.

Preaching workshop will be held Jan. 15 at Our Lady of Pompei by Fr. Fragomeni. To register, call the Diaconate Office.

Treasures of the Triduum workshop will be held Jan. 21 with

Fr. Douglas Martis and Fr. Michael Fuller.

Catholic Men's Conference will be March 19 at the Oak Brook Marriot. Fee is \$45 for the day, which includes lunch.

Reports of VDC's and DDC's:

Vicariate I

no report: Vice Chair George Kashmar will be in discussion with the vicariate DDC's to resolve their absentee status.

Vicariate II

Paul Spalla: Paul reported that there was a good turnout of deacons and wives for their annual Mass and Dinner held on Columbus Day. Their continuing education with Chick O'Leary went well. Two men made moves to other parishes thanks to the help of Dan Welter. Bishop Kane is interested in the transfers.

Vicariate III

Jose Vazquez: Meeting with bishop set for Dec. 4.

Vicariate IV

Giulo Camerini: Tom Coffey's (DDC 4E) position has not been filled as yet. A volunteer is being sought.

Vicariate V

Joseph Truesdale: Vicariate had an excellent turnout for the farewell Mass of Archbishop Gustavo at St. Rita High School. Fr. Edward Upton was appointed by the Cardinal as the interim vicar until a new bishop is appointed.

Vicariate VI

Dan Ragonese: Vicariate is planning their annual meeting with Bishop Perry.

Black Deacons, Hispanic Deacons and Representatives at large:

Black Deacons met with Fr. Mike. They discussed scheduling a date for next year's Beach Prayer Service; Catholics for nonviolence meeting

was held November 17, 2010; Healing the Land Prayer Service will be Feb. 4, Parish Leadership Day, Feb. 26, Peacemaking in a Culture of Violence, March 1-4; Lenten Vespers Service For Peace, April 1; End of School Rally, May, 24; and Sunrise Prayer Service, date yet to be determined.

Hispanic Deacons are planning a retreat in March.

Women of the Diaconate.

Nine ladies met on Nov. 10. They discussed the new directives, but felt it was of no consequence. The women stated that the directives from the DFP have changed their role. Many felt that they were not wanted.

Old business: St. Lawrence Day chairman was to be obtained from Vicariate V. Joe Truesdale stated he does not have a chairman as yet and perhaps he will have to take it.

Presbyteral Council rep Paul Spalla said at the Nov. 8 Presbyteral Council meeting, a lengthily discussion ensued with Deacon Bob Puhala and his team regarding the new directive and implementation of Diaconate training and formation.

Association of Priests: Dennis Colgan has requested for someone else to take this chair.

New business:

Hispanic Deacons stated that their annual convention will be held this year at the Embassy Suites in Chicago. The council was asked to assist in helping to defray the costs. A motion was made by Dan Welter to defer the motion to the Executive Committee.

Next meeting will be Jan. 8 at 9:15 a.m. in the Diaconate Office. The March meeting will be March 5, rather than the second Saturday due to a conflict.

Reflexiones del Vicario

(Continued from page 3)

las palabras del Cardenal George, “algunas oraciones serán más largas—el inglés será más rico y el tono será más expresivo al expresar nuestra humildad ante un Dios que es tan misericordioso, que nos da el poder de dirigirnos a Él en nuestras oraciones.” Lo que es extremadamente importante es que nosotros los diáconos, esposas, viudas de la Comunidad Diaconal entendamos el raciocinio detrás de estos cambios. Los fieles seguramente nos pedirán una explicación. Por eso nuestra próxima Convocación este Marzo es tan crítica. Por favor reserven la fecha del 12 de Marzo, 2011 desde las 8:30 a.m. a las 3:30 p.m. Aunque la Oficina de

Culto ya está ofreciendo al personal de las parroquias enseñanzas sobre el nuevo Misal, el día 12 de Marzo es especialmente para nosotros. El Cardenal George dijo muy claramente que esperaba que todos los sacerdotes asistieran al día de estudio y un record de mas de 1,300 sacerdotes asistieron. Espero lo mismo de nuestra Comunidad Diaconal!

Padre Michael Ahlstrom

Views from the Vicar

(Continued from page 3)

when compared to a simple church with the pews around the altar so the assembly is close and visible to each other. In the words of Cardinal George: “Some sentences will be longer -- the English vocabulary will be richer and the tone will be more expressive of our humility before a God who is so merciful that he gives us the power to address him in prayer.”

What is extremely important is that we, the deacons, wives and widows of the Diaconate community understand the rationale behind these changes. Parishioners may well be turning to us for an explanation. That is why our Convocation this March is so critical. If you have not yet done so, put March 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on your calendar. Even though the Office for Worship is offering parish staff study days on the New Missal, the March 12 program will be specifically geared to us. Cardinal George made it clear that he expected all priests to come to their study day and a record 1,300 plus came. I expect the same of our Diaconate community!

Father Michael Ahlstrom

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have recently gone to the Lord: Deacon James Whittle, '72; Deacon Ziggy Oborski, '79; Carmen Rodriguez, wife of Deacon Manuel Rodriguez, '72; the son of Deacon James and Suzanne Wogan; DeJon Johnson, son of Deacon Marv and Emily Johnson; the son of Deacon Joseph and Linda Stalcup; and Emma Collins, mother of Deacon Terrence Collins, '03.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Gregory Bzdou, John Lucas, Pablo Perez, Mel Both, Richard Stojak, Florence Szady, Marilyn O'Leary, Phil Fragassi, Beatriz Chairez, Charles Tippereiter, José Alvarez, Daniel Cabrera, Antonio Navarro, Carol Ciston, Maria Patiño, John Wilkenson, Ida Bohannon, Robert DeFiore, Robert Sasseti, Linda O'Donnell, Alicia Rivera, Susan Winblad, Janet Studer, Ed Ryan, Frank and Blanche DeVita, Maria Del Llano, Soledad Muñoz, Sabino Sanchez, Patricia Gniech, Angelo and Maria Cordoba, Ernestina Ponce, Edwin Martinez, Teresa Ochoa, Donald Palmer, Agnes Barrett, John Burt, José Uroza, Wilmer Rodriguez, Santos Soto, Jose Marrero, Iris Diaz, John Simmons, Ronald Wiener, William Malloy, Mary Actaboski, Bill Warmouth's sister, Cheryl Becker and Mary Gronkiewicz. Prayers are also asked for Alfonso Peña, brother of Deacon Leonardo Peña, '99.

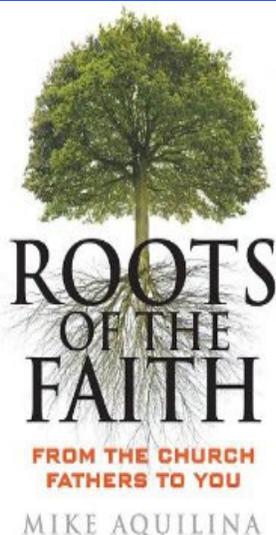
Please contact the Diaconate Office at (708) 366-8900 to add names to the sick and deceased list.

Mass Memorial Cards

Mass Memorial Cards are available through the Diaconate Community.

To request cards, please email or call Deacon Chuck McFarland at ctm728@aol.com or call (815) 464-4760.

Recommended Reading



In *Roots of the Faith*, Mike Aquilina examines Catholic concepts like the Mass, confession, and teachings against abortion and then goes back to see what the early Christians actually practiced and believed. How does he know? The Church Fathers, of course, addressed these very issues and left a written record for us.

This is highly practical and very accessible book which is of great value in dealing with the objections of those people who believe the Catholic Church has arbitrarily changed everything around from the way it was in the early days of the Church. An excellent book - highly recommended.

Assignment of deacons: A time for change

(Continued from page 1)

and mature personally, professionally and ministerially. How we approach a change - how we appreciate or dread it - can make the transition easier or harder on us, our families and the communities we serve.

In ministry, we learn that we are not self-directed. We say yes to God - and then we hang on. Like our Mother Mary, the Apostles, saints and other heroes of the Church, we are called into partnership with God, to serve his people. It is a call to abandon ourselves to God's will, to go where we may be called by his Church. It is hard to be open to this call to serve, especially when we *think* we are already answering God's call and doing his will right where we are currently assigned.

The Gospel calls us to surrender to God's invitation to join our lives to his will for us. The paschal mystery is all about change - dying to self and rising to new life. And this seeking of God's will for us is foreign in a society that places such high value on self-determination and personal fulfillment.

We, as ordained ministers for the people of God, have been called, formed and sent to serve his people. But where and how this calling will be lived out is not just once and forever. It is a dynamic, ongoing call of the Spirit, a call that disciples and servants of the Lord (deacons) need to be attentive to if the Church is to grow and be alive in this world.

Notwithstanding all this, the very practical process and procedures for discerning a change of assignment

can be stressful. Fr. Ahlstrom has described the transition for a deacon and his family to a new parish to be akin to getting a divorce you don't want, marrying a bride you've never met, moving to a new town and getting a new job *all at the same time!*

For some years now, the reassignment of deacons has been driven by either a self-determined need for change or some difficulty in an assignment that made a transfer necessary. However, a real, periodic assessment of the need for deacons in a vicariate and a specific dialog between a deacon (and his spouse) and the local bishop has not been undertaken. For the good of the local church in its mission to all of God's people and for the good of the deacon and his family to serve effectively, the process of transfer is being examined and enhanced.

A fundamental consideration in any process for reassignment is the need for the deacon's ministry in a particular vicariate. When a true need has been discerned, the generous response of the Diaconate community in this archdiocese has been outstanding. And please make no mistake; there are many needs today - parishes without any diaconal presence, parishes with only one priest, understaffed agencies that are involved in traditional diaconal endeavors.

The revamped process contemplates a real dialog as a deacon under the age of 62 approaches 10 years of service in a particular parish. The process will initiate with an evaluation of the current assignment as well as the skills of the deacon. Special circumstances in the current assignment and in the personal/professional life of the deacon and his family will also be surfaced. At the same time, the deacon will be

advised of the ministerial needs within his current vicariate as determined by the vicariate bishop and his staff. A catalog of parish profiles will also be available for review by the deacon and his family.

During the last year of the normal 10-year assignment, the deacon and his wife are called to enter into a period of personal discernment and a dialog with the bishop facilitated by the Deacon Personnel Board representative. Opportunities to meet with potential pastors and staffs will be arranged. Ultimately, all parties will, hopefully, reach a consensus that serves the needs of the people and appropriately utilizes the skills and gifts of the deacon for ministry.

Given the needs of the archdiocese in all the vicariates as well as the spirit of service within the Diaconate community, it is anticipated that most deacons will be assigned to a new parish at the end of a 10-year term. Some may be deferred for a one- or two-year period for extraordinary reasons, but the norm for all deacons will be 10 years.

Undoubtedly, as the new process for discernment of assignment is developed and implemented, there will be mistakes and the need for modifications. Your wisdom and input are necessary and welcomed.

As said at the beginning, all change is hard, but I am certain we who are called to service and leadership in the Archdiocese of Chicago will meet the needs of God's people with the generosity and selflessness that has been our hallmark from the inception of the Permanent Diaconate in Chicago.

Deacon Daniel Welter is chairman of the Diaconate Personnel Board

December:

- 8 Immaculate Conception
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 15 Women of the Diaconate meeting
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas

January

- 1 Mary, Mother of God
- 12 Women of the Diaconate meeting
- 14-16 Retreat for deacons and wives
- 15 Preaching workshop



*Wishing a blessed Christmas
to all of the Diaconate
Community and its many
supporters.*

Numbers to know:

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