



THE FLAME

Volume 5 Number 6

www.ChicagoDeacons.org

December 2009 - January 2010

Convocation to stress unity, diversity

By Dave Brencic

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., no less, has invited Chicago's Diaconate community to its first-ever overnight convocation in January.

In an open letter to all deacons, active and retired, the cardinal said the overnight gathering is "a very important opportunity for the deacons and wives to pray, share wisdom and enter into dialogue with me and the auxiliary bishops from their vicariates. I look forward to celebrating the Eucharist and to spending time with you."

"We are One Faith, One Community, One Future" is the theme of the convocation scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 23-

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Talk to focus on cultural diversity



Dr. Samuel Betances will be the keynote speaker at the Diaconate Convocation.

By Dave Brencic

Dr. Samuel Betances, motivational speaker and consultant, is ready and waiting to challenge Chicago's Diaconate community.

Betances, who is giving the keynote address at the Overnight Convocation in January, guarantees to provoke some thought and discussion as he raises issues on how deacons can minister to a more culturally diverse Catholic Church.

"We have a church that is aging and changing, especially with the impact of Hispanics," Betances said.

Betances has taught classes and sessions with the Diaconate Formation Program focusing on cultural awareness and ministry, especially the issues of racism and segregation. Part of the class involved studying Cardinal George's pastoral letter on racism "Dwell in My Love" and how to be effective

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St. Francis Day Dinner a success

Despite some initial concerns, this year's St. Francis Day Dinner proved to be the most successful event ever. More than 300 people attended the dinner and after expenses, the dinner raised \$26,000.

"It demonstrated what it means to be a Diaconate community, not only by gathering together physically, but by collaborating to reach out to help members of the community in times of need," said Fr. Michael Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate.

The ad book made the bulk of the profit. Having raffle tickets available to those who could not attend, as well as some free-will donations, also helped.

This money enables the Diaconate Council to fund three parts of the community. There is the Mutual Aid Fund which helps deacons and families who are facing

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Diaconate Council president Deacon Dave Egan presents the St. Francis award to Deacon Dan Welter at the St. Francis Day Dinner.

All grown up

As a parent, it was a bittersweet moment. My only daughter, Jennie, was getting married. It's the hope and dream of every parent to see our children begin a career and find a special someone they can spend their life with. But there is also that touch of sadness because you know that your relationship with your child will be forever changed. You are no longer No. 1 in the lives and eyes of your child.

Jennie married a young man named Tyler who is pursuing his Ph.D. in engineering at Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind. So not only is she leaving the nest, my little girl is moving more than 100

miles away.

During my speech at the wedding reception, I tried to emphasize how Jennie and Tyler are journeying side by side, as partners for life, and how they "complete" each other. This young couple has parents, grandparents and friends who have been married 25, 40, 50 years - that's a lot of wisdom and knowledge to tap into. Those are examples of a lot of hard work.

I also wanted to make clear how proud we are and we have welcomed Tyler into our family with open arms. At times, there has been some awkwardness in our relationship. Our Catholic faith is everything to our family and Tyler

has never been baptized or belonged to a church. He asks lots of questions and goes to church with Jennie and is very supportive, which are all very important.

I pray for him every day that he will have a conversion of heart. Sometimes it's a fine line we walk as parent/deacon - to be welcoming, but not come across as pushing or pressuring.

It's all in God's hands. My job? To love, support, nurture and occasionally remind them to keep that flame of love and faith alive in their hearts and marriage.

Keep that 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
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Deadline for submissions for the next issue is Jan. 15, 2010

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.

Ya crecida

Como padre, tuve un momento agrídulce. Mi única hija Jennie, se iba a casar. Es la esperanza y el sueño de todos los padres el ver a sus hijos comenzar una carrera y encontrar a alguien especial con quien compartir su vida. Pero también hay algo de pena porque uno sabe que su relación con tu hija cambiará para siempre. Ya no serás el número 1 en los ojos de tus hijos.

Jennie se casó con un joven llamado Tyler quien está siguiendo su doctorado en ingeniería en la universidad de Purdue, en Lafayette, Indiana. Así es que no solo va a dejar el nido, sino que mi niña se estará trasladando a unas 100 millas de distancia.

Durante mis palabras en la recepción de la boda, traté de enfatizar como Jennie y Tyler están comenzando su viaje juntos, como compañeros para toda la vida y como se complementan el uno al otro. Esta joven pareja tiene padres, abuelos y amigos que están casados por 25, 40, 50 años - es mucha sabiduría de la que pueden

aprender. Esos son ejemplos de mucho trabajo arduo.

También quería dejar en claro cuan orgullosos nos sentimos y dar la bienvenida con los brazos abiertos a Tyler, a nuestra familia. Algunas veces hubo algún roce en nuestra relación. Nuestra fe católica es todo en nuestra familia y Tyler nunca a sido bautizado ni pertenece a ninguna iglesia. El hace muchas preguntas y va a misa con Jennie además de darle su apoyo, cosa que es muy importante.

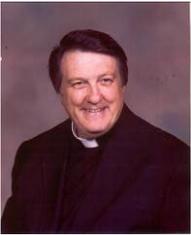
Rezo por que el algún día tenga una conversión de corazón. Es una línea delgada por la que caminamos como diácono/padre al dar la bienvenida y no parecer como que estamos presionando o empujando a hacer algo.

Todo está en las manos de Dios. Mi trabajo? El de amar, apoyar, cuidar y ocasionalmente recordarles que mantengan viva la llama de amor y fe en sus corazones y en su matrimonio.

Mantengan el fuego encendido,

Diácono Dave Brencic, editor

Views from the Vicar



Advent-Christmas: As you read this, we will be in the midst of Advent preparing for Christmas. I want to extend to all of you my prayers and best wishes for a very Blessed and Joyful Christmas Season. In the parish where I live, our pastor, Father Robert Casey, is helping us to view Advent and Christmas as two contiguous seasons that really form one. While the music, readings, vestments, art and environment change, they form two parts of one whole. They are all about celebrating the mystery of incarnation, the enfleshment of God. One aspect of Advent is the notion of quiet anticipation. Christmas needs a corresponding

quiet to take in the meaning of all the sights and sounds of the season. Accordingly, we are intending to better use the times of silence found in the liturgy. Quiet time is very countercultural this time of year, yet it is so very much needed.

Can you name the seven times during Mass that silence is called for by the rubrics? Most people cannot because most parishes do not observe them in more than a perfunctory way. The seven times are: 1. Before Mass to put ourselves into a prayerful place and be ready to hear God speak to us. 2. At the beginning of the penitential rite as we call to mind our sins and ask God’s mercy. 3. After the priest says, “Let us pray,” we pray in silence as individuals before he says the opening prayer. 4 and 5. After the first two readings, we need to allow an image or phrase we have heard to sink into us. 6. After the

homily, so we can reflect on what God is saying to us. 7. After communion, so we can sit with the Lord and let him speak to us and transform us. These times of quiet are more about our being ready to hear God than our speaking to him. The quiet reflectiveness of Advent needs to overflow into Christmas so we can grow in the spirit of these great seasons.

Catholics Come Home: The Dioceses of Rockford and Joliet, and the Archdiocese of Chicago will be launching over a million dollars worth of TV commercials inviting Catholics who have been away from church to come home. The ministry of charity is the special call of the deacon. Like the Good Shepherd, he goes after those who have strayed. These include, not only those who are financially poor, but the spiritually impoverished. That is

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Reflexiones del Vicario

Adviento-Navidad Cuando lean esto estaremos en medio del Adviento preparándonos para la Navidad. Quiero enviar a todos ustedes mis oraciones y buenos deseos por una bendecida y gozosa temporada de Navidad. En la parroquia donde yo vivo, el pastor Padre Casey nos esta ayudando a ver Adviento y Navidad como dos estaciones que en realidad forman una sola. A pesar de que la música, las lecturas, las vestimentas, el arte y el ambiente cambian, forman dos partes de una. Ellas se refieren a la celebración del misterio de la encarnación, el Dios encarnado. Un aspecto del Adviento es la noción de una tranquila preparación. A la Navidad también le corresponde una quietud para poder apreciar el significado de toda las manifestaciones y los sonidos de la estación. De acuerdo a ella estamos atendiendo a usar mejor los momentos de silencio que se encuentran en la liturgia.

Pueden nombrar 7 veces donde las rubricas piden silencio en la Misa? La mayoría de la gente no pueden porque la mayoría de las parroquias no las observan. Las 7 veces son:

- 1) Antes que comience la Misa para ponernos en un ambiente de oración y para escuchar a Dios que nos va a hablar.
- 2) Al principio del acto de contricción para recordar nuestros pecados y pedir la misericordia de Dios.
- 3) Despues que el sacerdote diga “Oremos”. Nosotros oramos como individuos antes de que el haga la oración de apertura.
- 4 & 5) Después de las primeras dos lecturas, nosotros necesitamos permitir que una imagen o una frase que hemos escuchado nos haga pensar.
- 6) Después de la homilía, para reflexionar sobre lo que Dios nos ha dicho.
- 7) Después de la comunión, para podernos sentar con el Señor y dejar que nos hable y nos transforme. Todos estos momentos de silencio son para estar atentos, para escuchar a Dios mas que

nosotros hablar con El. Los momentos reflectivos de Adviento necesitan desenbocar en la Navidad, de manera que podamos crecer en el espíritu de esta gran estación.

Católicos regresen a casa. Cuando lean esto las Diócesis de Rockford, Joliet y la Arquidiócesis de Chicago estarán lanzando una campaña en la televisión que costará mas de un millón de dollars para invitar a Católicos que han estado alejados de la iglesia para que regresen a casa. El ministerio de la caridad es el llamado especial del diácono. Como el Buen Pastor el vá atras de los desamparados. Esto incluye no solamente los pobres de cosas materials pero también los pobres espiritualmente. Esto es porque mi sueño de ver a los diáconos envueltos en el trabajo de Evangelización. Estoy muy orgulloso con aquellos que han contestado al llamado de coordinadores de parroquia para la iniciativa de *Católicos regresen a casa* Aún si tu

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Web site gives hope, advice to job seekers

"I am troubled, Lord, because I am unable to find the work I seek. It seems to be getting harder and harder to get out of bed each morning and face the reality which confronts me. I work long and hard each day in my search for employment, yet most days I find lead to more frustration and rejection than success. Every week brings fresh news that more of my sisters and brothers have lost their jobs for reasons beyond their control. Each day finds me becoming more and more concerned about both my ability to find work, and to care for myself and my family. I am in need of your loving touch, Lord God."

-- Mark Zwolski, Fourth Friday Project

By Dave Brencic

Being out of work for some 20 months, Deacon Mark Zwolski decided to devote some of his time to a new ministry - helping the unemployed through prayer and practical job-seeking advice.

Zwolski launched a newsletter called the Fourth Friday Project this fall targeting those who are seeking work. The newsletter is an offshoot of the myprayerbreak.com Web site, which Zwolski works on and which provides prayers, reflections and inspirational messages for people at work. The site offers subscription membership to daily prayer services, the Votive Candle Prayer Network, a Library of Prayers and work topics.

Describing it as "a hobby of sorts," Zwolski said he has always been interested in ways that "combine the link between work and faith."

"The Fourth Friday Project is an outgrowth of what I was doing. The newsletter is one more step for keeping it in front of people. The newsletter is more of a help for unemployed or underemployed," he

said.

Zwolski estimates about 100 people have signed up for the weekly and biweekly newsletters, which continue to get forwarded on to people as word spreads. Zwolski said he has seen heavier traffic on the site when the prayers and newsletter are posted.

He has received a number of comments from people, even internationally, and has connected with the LinkedIn professional networking Web site, which has a group of permanent deacons.

Zwolski, whose background and experience is in operations consulting, strategic planning, logistics and performance management, has started his own consulting business, Array Resources. He admits that he has "done some work, not a lot," but he has used part of the time to take care of his mother. When he's not actively looking for a job, the newsletter helps fill some of the time.

The actual newsletter contains practical tips for job seekers such as information on resumes, networking, preparing for an interview and being persistent. For the unemployed, Zwolski offers suggestions for how to keep a positive attitude. A lot of the information comes from Zwolski's network of friends and experts he has connected with in his own job search.

Then there are the prayers, which Zwolski writes himself, and which provide comfort and inspiration to the un/underemployed. Even the occasional homily gets included, when Zwolski preaches in his parish on a topic that involves the unemployed.

"The prayers are a takeoff of the prayers I have in the subscription program," Zwolski said. "It's sitting at the keyboard and putting myself in the right mind-frame."

The whole idea behind the Fourth Friday Project is networking professionally and spiritually.

"Invite people to go to the Web site and look at what's out there and share the information. (We're) trying to establish a prayer network."

The Fourth Friday Project Prayers for November can be accessed at: <http://arrayres.com/MPB4THF1109.html>. Additional information about the Fourth Friday Project (prayers for our unemployed sisters and brothers) can be found at: <http://arrayres.com/MPB4THFR1.html>

Ministry classes offered

The Institute of Hispanic Liturgy will be offering classes to expand the knowledge, spirituality and the ministerial ability of participants so that they may address the community with a more adequate service in the faith.

The classes are open to deacons and others who have at least three years of experience in ministerial service and have participated in a lay ministry leadership program such as: Pastoral Lay Institute, Basic Liturgy Course, Catechesis Certification, Basic RCIA or Intensive RCIA.

Participants should be recommended by their pastor or the administrator of the parish. An interview is part of the application process.

Classes will be held from 7 to 9:30 p.m. every Tuesday. There also will be a Saturday session every quarter. Classes start Jan 19 and will be held at St. Eulalia in Maywood.

For more information about this course in Spanish, contact Jose Castillo (312) 534-8010, jcastillo@odw.org, or Jackie Moyeno at (312) 534-8010, jmoyeno@archchicago.org.

Our very special men and women

By Father Ed Salmon

Truth be known, every single one of you is very special. Anyone in the Diaconate community is special. But I suggest our widows and our senior deacons and their wives are maybe just that bit more special. They have served God's people well. They have modeled service for the rest of us. We owe them our thanks and love.

This summer we once again shared a wonderful lunch with those who could join our committee. Good food, old and new friends, lots of stories and reminiscing. We are pleased so many could be with us; sad that others could not due to all kinds of reasons. But you all remain in our thoughts and prayers. And we, in turn, in yours we hope.

Our thanks to Father Mike Ahlstrom and Dennis Colgan, and the support of the Diaconate Council in making these gatherings possible. Thanks, too, to my wonderful committee - Judy Finnegan, Lauretta Dienberg, Dolores Schoewe, Mary Kay Handrigan, Bernie Hennig, Joe Winblad, Lory Madonia and Charlie O'Donnell.

We all know the story of Acts 6

so well. The Diaconate was called forth to care for the widows and orphans. Unfortunately, we have not done as well as we could with our own widows. Do we need another group called forth to serve our own?

The reason I mention this challenge is because many of the widows in particular have said that we are the only ones who contact them! No contact from classmates, from deacons and wives in their area. We MUST do better.

One lady told us that our phone call was the first contact from anyone in the Diaconate community since her husband died eight years ago! Last year, we were unable to reach her, and before that no one even tried it seems.

If one of these special ladies lives anywhere near you or is a classmate, please be in touch. Invite them to come with you to our various activities and meetings. They may not come, but at least they are remembered. Should one of the ladies live in the parish in which you serve, may I ask you and your wife to please include her, and be in touch somewhat regularly at least. We do wonderful work, no doubt. But we must take care of our own.

Fr. Ed Salmon is the Widows/Senior Deacons Coordinator.

CRS seeks volunteers and donations

The Office for Peace and Justice CRS Committee is looking for people to get involved. 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.

—For more information on Operation Rice Bowl, CRS' Lenten program and how you can participate next year please, contact Curry by phone or email.

—The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and CRS call on Catholics in the United States to confront global poverty. Advocate with us to end hunger, disease, conflict and other issues that affect the lives of our brothers and sisters worldwide. For more information, visit Catholics Confront Global Poverty

—We welcome you to join CRS as we spread joy to the world this Christmas season. You can help CRS share our many blessings when you fill your loved one's Christmas stockings with gifts chosen from the new CRS Gift Catalog.

—Our catalog is brimming with new stories about CRS programs that alleviate suffering by feeding, sheltering, comforting, healing and educating those who are enduring life's most difficult circumstances. The catalog can be found at http://donate.crs.org/site/R?_Qrqx4JmaAl31rg-T4VliZw

—In the last two months, several natural disasters have struck Asia and the Pacific, killing hundreds, leaving massive destruction and flooding in its wake and thousands homeless.

For more than 60 years, CRS has been helping people as they struggle to survive natural disasters. CRS is committed to bringing our experience and our compassion to quickly and effectively respond to this string of emergencies. But we cannot do this critical work without your help. The needs will be tremendous.

Please give generously to help the thousands of victims of the wake of these disasters. Make checks payable to: Catholic Relief Service and print "Philippines" on the memo line. Send to: Archdiocese of Chicago Office for Peace and Justice, Catholic Relief Services, 3525 S. Lake Park Ave. Chicago, IL 60653-1402 Attn: Adrienne Curry.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Events

Archdiocese of Chicago Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs will hold the following events:

-- Sunday, Jan. 24, from 4 to 5 p.m. 10th Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Chicago. Ecumenical Prayer Service will be at Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Ave., Wilmette.

-- Wednesday, March 10, from 7 to 9 p.m. 15th Annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture "Paul and Judaism: Ten New Perspectives." Speaker: will be Fr.

Daniel Harrington, S.J., Ph.D., of the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies.

-- Tuesday, May 4, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. 4th Annual Abrahamic Faiths Intersections On the Economy at DePaul University. 2312 N. Clifton Ave., Chicago

-- Wednesday, May 19, from noon to 1 p.m. 25th Annual Memorial Observance for Indigent Persons at the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington St., Chicago.

For more information, call (312) 534-5325 or e-mail: eia@archchicago.org

Stritch Retreat House update

By Richard Hudzik

For a week in November, I was blessed with the opportunity to live and work at Holy Family Parish in the tiny town of Molineaux on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean. Living without hot water, without air conditioning, without safe roads, without understanding all that is said to you can be a blessing. Along with these deprivations comes time for conversation, laughter, fellowship and prayer. With the stripping away comes the filling up.

The process of descent and ascent is the same spiritual process which happens on a retreat – we come away to a desert, to a place of quiet, to pray. Distractions and our usual, comfortable ways are removed to allow us to enter into quiet. The life of ministry requires this quiet – certainly, at a minimum, annually.

There remain several options for retreats in the first half of 2010. Of course, in addition, there is the possibility of a private or a directed retreat, virtually at any time.

– Jan. 29-31: Deacons and wives. Fr. James Kubicki, SJ, is preaching this retreat. Originally sponsored by the Classes of '97, '98 and '99, it is now open to all, given the fact that we have had two of our couples' retreats filled and with waiting lists. Fr. Kubicki, SJ, national director of the Apostleship of Prayer, will be preaching "Living the

Eucharist with the Heart of Jesus." He sees two movements to dwell in this way of living. First, there is the call to go deeper in our prayer lives by entering into the Heart of Jesus and feeling and thinking with his thoughts and feelings. Second, we are given this Heart in the Eucharist and we are called to not only believe and celebrate the Eucharist, but to live it as well. What does this all mean? How, concretely, do we live in the Eucharist?

- Feb. 12-14: Deacons. Fr. William Zavaski will be preaching on a selection of Paul's letters as a source for *lectio divina* and spiritual growth. Fr. Zavaski is pastor of St. James Parish in Arlington Heights. He is a gifted and enthusiastic preacher and he comes to us on the strong recommendation of Fr. Mike Ahlstrom.
- 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.

Regarding the work in St. Kitts, if there are any deacons or wives who might be interested in a short-term stay for ministry, give me a call and I can discuss it with you. Perhaps, we can arrange your ministry trip there.

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

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who recently have gone to the Lord: Valerie Boggio, wife of the late Deacon Edward Boggio '84; and Dolores Villalobos, wife of Deacon Antonio Villalobos, '72, Deacon James Przepasniak, '98.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Mel Both, John Lucas, Robert Devereux, Susan Winblad, Olyssa Sasseti, niece of Bob Sasseti, Janet Studer, wife of the late Deacon Marvin Studer '85, Ed Ryan, Frank and Blanche DeVita, Joe McDonnell, José Vazquez, Bienvenido Nieves, Maria Del Llano, Soledad Muñoz, Jim Deiters, Roberto Figueroa, Sabino Sanchez, Ken Jenney, Patricia Gniech, Angelo Cordoba, Edwin Martinez, Vito DeCanio, Donald Palmer, Agnes Barrett, John Burt, José Uroza, Wilmer Rodriguez, Santos Soto, Jose Marrero, Jose Alvarez, Joaquin Varela, Iris Diaz, John Simmons, Ronald Wiener, William Malloy, Cheryl Ann Gaca, daughter of Ron and Linda Morowczynski, Cheryl Becker, Cindy Hernandez-Kolsky and Mary Gronkiewicz.



Diaconate Council Notes November 14, 2009



Play to benefit Gridiron Warriors

Saint Damien of Molokai was canonized by the Vatican Oct. 11, and Wayne Messmer is excited about bringing to life the saint's powerful message on stage as a fundraiser to benefit the Gridiron Warriors Saturday, Dec. 12 in the award-winning one-man show by Aldyth Morris at the Chapel Theater at the corner of Pine and Lincoln in Winnetka.

The Gridiron Warriors are former high school football players paralyzed following spinal cord injuries incurred while playing the game.

Messmer has worked as a singer, financial planner and done work on radio and TV. He has performed the show previously in 2002 at the Raue Theater in Crystal Lake and at the Archdiocese Festival of Faith.

He and his wife Kathleen have visited the leper colony in Kaulapapa, Molokai, Hawaii, several times as a way to tune into Damien's spirit and persona.

Messmer fought his own battle back from despair. He was shot in the neck during a bungled burglary attempt and has had a profound deepening of his faith.

"The Spirit of this man inspires me to the core." Messmer said. "I crave the opportunity to share with audiences the heart and soul of this incredible and unique human being."

Tickets for "Damien" are \$20. For more information, call (888) 736-7552.

« Treasurer's report, Chuck McFarland. A written report was presented, indicating that accounts have been consolidated. There is an Oct. 31 balance of \$42,751.87.

« Meetings on Catholics Come Home: Father Mike Ahlstrom said meetings are being planned for deacons as a follow-up after the initial public presentation. Attempts are being made to coordinate these activities. Bill Stearns said the written material that may not have been received may need to be picked up at the Meyer Center.

« St. Francis Day: Stearns reported that \$26,523.00 was the net. Ron and Linda Morowczynski and Andrew and Maggie Bierwattes will act as next chairs for 2010. A substantial increase in ads resulted in a record gross. Next dinner will be Oct. 3, 2010, at Elmcrest in Elmwood Park.

« Dan Welter reported that for the Overnight Convocation 117 persons have sent in reservations as of Nov. 14. The cutoff date for the convocation registration is Dec. 11.

« Stearns/Welter. Nominations are being accepted for the Executive Board. Nomination committee headed by Welter. President, vice president, secretary and treasurer are open. Nominations can be sent to DCNDAN@RCN.COM or call (708) 363-2389.

« Vicar's report: DDC should contact deacons urging participation in Catholics Come Home and the Convocation. As to the latter, letters will be sent to all pastors, Convocation open to widows and deacons from other dioceses. Requests are being made for written suggested topics for dialogue with the cardinal.

There was no VDC meeting

following the general meeting because of the Zacchaeus House Luncheon. A meeting may well be rescheduled. A newly revised Diaconate Handbook is being developed.

« VDCs: Paul Spalla and Frank Biel for Vicariate II reported on meetings with new pastors. Chick O'Leary reported on a December weekend retreat at Stritch Retreat Houses for Pro-Life Ministry.

VDCs present talked about several parishes seeking deacons.

Chris Virusso said he contacted new pastors of Divine Savior and St. Cornelius in Vicariate II. Fr. Mike said VDCs should start coordinating the need for deacons with pastors (especially new pastors).

McFarland in Vicariate V contacted new pastors at St. Michael and St. Elizabeth Seton. He inquired about a transfer program and was reminded about the six-month probationary period with a six-month signed agreement. O'Leary requested a current list of parishes requesting deacons be made available.

Father Ahlstrom requested that all VDCs send their reports on meetings with the pastors and will also write to pastors regarding possible needs.

« Margaret Colgan discussed the development of a special workshop for women at the Convocation.

« There was no report from either the Black or Hispanic Deacon representatives.

« Dennis Colgan said a review of a new program on hospital chaplaincy ministry in the Emmaus Program is being worked on.

Next meeting is Jan. 9.

Talk to focus on cultural diversity

(Continued from page 1)

deacons ministering to a diverse church.

Betances, a sociology professor, taught at Northeastern University for more than 25 years. He has conducted training programs in countries around the world, for Fortune 500 companies, governmental agencies and community groups. He also has been involved with training new chaplains in the military.

In his convocation address, Betances said he will explore strategies for being a more effective deacon in the face of an increasingly diverse Catholic Church.

One way is the creation of dialogue and discussion groups within a parish or community where issues can be brought forward.

“We need to invite people to have different discussions on critical things like abortion or how people join ministry and identify what are the most significant challenges that new Catholics, newcomers or immigrants face,” Betances said. “Deacons ought to be the providers of options.”

He stressed that deacons shouldn’t limit themselves to serving people just like themselves, but need to go beyond their comfort zones.

Betances said he hopes his talk “adds to the leadership tool kit of deacons.”

He guarantees that it will be a lively exchange.

“It will be fun, spirited, passionate, motivational and inspirational and full of practical lessons,” Betances said. “If every deacon present can take three or four ideas that add value to the vital things they are already doing, I will leave happy.”

Convocation to stress unity, diversity

(Continued from page 1)

24, at the Intercontinental Chicago O’Hare Hotel in Rosemont.

“We will emphasize our unity as the Diaconate community, while recognizing that we are very diverse,” said Fr. Michael Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate.

Pamphlets were mailed out in October outlining the gathering, speakers and the registration information. The registration deadline is Dec. 11.

An assortment of speakers have been finalized for the convocation. Giving the keynote address Saturday morning will be Dr. Samuel Betances, who has taught and lectured at universities, published articles and served as a consultant for a variety of private and public organizations. There also will be time for deacons to dialogue with Betances..

In the afternoon, Cardinal George will give a presentation and be available to answer questions from the Diaconate community.

Deacons will have had the opportunity to register for a variety of workshops. Speakers will include Father Ronald Kunkel speaking on “Source and Summit: Reflections on the Revised Roman Missal”; Father James Presta on “Mary in the Liturgy”; Father Richard Hynes on “Zealous in Action and Dedicated to Contemplation: Mission and Communion”; Father Richard Simon on “Where Worship Meets Charity: God’s Self-Revelation in the Poor”; Father Esequiel Sanchez on “A Conversation on the Leadership of the Hispanic Minister”; and Professor Mary Stimming on “Angle of Repose: Tired of Balancing

Everything? Lean on the Cross.”

Following the workshops there will be vicariate meetings with the auxiliary bishops and VDCs. There also are plans to have a variety of vendors on-site during the convocation.

The convocation will also have its share of fun. An optional champagne art gallery walk is being offered by the hotel and in the evening there will be a banquet with entertainment and the presentation of the annual ministry awards.

On Sunday, Cardinal George will return to the convocation to celebrate Mass. The day will end with a panel discussion and community dialogue with the executive committee of the Diaconate Council.

To defray costs for the convocation, there will be a \$25 registration fee per person and \$75 will be deducted from all deacons’ educational accounts whether they attend the convocation or not. There will be a \$10 per person late fee for registrations received after Dec. 11. Registration forms and checks must be sent at the same time.

Hotel accommodations will be \$89 per room. Participants also must make their own hotel reservations. Three meals will be included.

The overnight convocation will replace the annual St. Stephen Symposium and the Spring Convocation in 2010.

Those planning to stay overnight may book their rooms at the special discounted rate by contacting InterContinental Chicago O’Hare 5300 N. River Road Rosemont, IL 60018 phone 847.544.5300

Views from the Vicar

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why it has been my dream to see deacons in the work of evangelization. I am proud of those of you who have answered the call to work as parish coordinators for the Catholics Come Home initiative. Even if you are not directly involved in coordinating this effort for your parish, I am expecting you to be encouraging parishioners to be praying for those who have been away and for the success of the efforts being made by their parish to welcome people back. We expect tens of thousands to come home, but we need your effort, not only to get them home, but also to do the follow-up after they come back.

St. Francis Day: A big thank-you is owed to those who worked so hard to make St. Francis Day the great success that it was. The \$26,000 profit is the most we have ever made. More than 300 people came for the dinner. Bill and Anne Stearns were a great chair-couple. Elsewhere in today's *Flame* you will find those who served on their committee. We owe them all our gratitude.

The Convocation All indications are that our convocation Jan. 23-24 will be a great success. If ever we are to experience what it means to be a Diaconate "community" it will be during these two days. Before the dialogue with Cardinal George, we will be asking people to submit any concerns they would like our archbishop to address. These will be collected at the convocation. The committee thought this would be a better approach than to have an open microphone, which eliminates the more introverted from getting to voice their concerns, and prevent someone dominating the microphone. Start thinking about what you would like Cardinal George to address. If you have not yet signed up for the convocation, it is not too late to do so. Do it today!

Father Michael Ahlstrom

Reflexiones del Vicario

(Continued from page 3)

no estas envuelto directamente en la coordinación de este esfuerzo en tu parroquia. Espero que ustedes estaran animando a los parroquianos para que oren por aquellos que han estado alejados y por el éxito del esfuerzo que se ha hecho para dar la bienvenida a aquellos que regresan. Esperamos a miles *regresando a casa*, pero necesitamos tu ayuda no solamente para traerlos a casa sino para continuar con ellos después.

Muchas gracias les debemos a aquellos que trabajaron tanto para hacer del **Dia de San Francisco** el éxito que fué. La ganancia fué de \$26.000. Es la mayor ganancia que se ha hecho hasta ahora. Mas de 300 personas vinieron a la comida. Bill y Anne Stearns fueron la pareja coordinadora. En otro lugar de este boletín encontrarán a todos los demás que siervieron en este comité. Les debemos a todos ellos muchas gracias

La Convocación Todo indica que nuestra convocación en Enero 23 y 24 del 2010 será un gran éxito. Para el diálogo con nuestro Cardenal George estamos pidiendo a todos ustedes que sometan con tiempo cualquier preocupación que les gustaría que el Cardenal tocará. Estas se recogerán en la convocación. El comité ha pensado que este sería una major forma que tener un micrófono el cual elimina a todos aquellos que no se atreven a dirigirse al Cardenal con sus preguntas y prevenir que alguien domine todo el diálogo. Empiecen a pensar acerca de lo que les gustaría que el Cardenal comentara. Si todavía no te has registrado para la convocación, todavía no es tarde, Hazlo hoy mismo!

Padre Michael Ahlstrom

Class on public speaking

Deacon Peter Manning will be teaching a class on "Public Speaking and Professional Presentations." The class is being offered at St Albert the Great Parish on six consecutive Tuesday evenings from Jan. 12 to Feb. 16.

Sessions will run from 7 to 9 p.m. The class at St. Albert the Great will be held in the convent conference room at 8000 Linder Ave. in Burbank.

The class can also be taken at St. George Church in Tinley Park on Thursdays beginning Jan. 14. The classes, which will run from 7 to 9 p.m., will be held in the St. George Parish Center, 6707 W. 175th St., in meeting room 4.

There is a \$30 fee for books and materials.

This class will be useful to people who are in sales, people who must give presentations or even for those who may be called on to give a toast at a wedding reception. It would also benefit priests, deacons and ministers who preach.

Deacon Manning holds a master's degree in Spirituality from Loyola University Chicago, and a bachelor's degree from Loyola in Organizational, Development and Leadership with a concentration in business communications.

For the past five years, Manning and his wife Barbara have given many retreats, days of reflection, workshops and parish missions. Manning was in sales over 23 years, and has given many sales presentations to both clients and as a sales manager. He also does workshops on communication and team building for parish staffs and faculties.

To register, send your name, phone number and a check made out to Manning Ministries at St. Albert the Great Catholic Church c/o Deacon Peter Manning, 5555 State Road, Burbank, IL 60459.

Gala benefits Zacchaeus House

More than 100 friends and supporters of Zacchaeus House gathered at St. James at Sag Bridge Parish in Lemont on Saturday, Nov. 14, for food, fellowship and fun. The event was hosted by Deacon John Wilkinson and his pastor, Fr. Ed Gleeson.

The parish provided the meeting room, food and servers who were Confirmation candidates. Bishop Joseph Perry emceed the event.

“We’re thrilled that so many folks were able to join us today,” said Deacon Alfred Coleman, director of Zacchaeus House. “We thank them for their continuing support, especially in light of the current economy!”



Zacchaeus resident Ron and Deacon Alfred Coleman stand ready to greet Zacchaeus supporters

Fr. Ed Gleeson and Deacon John Wilkinson arranged for the use of the meeting room at St. James Sag Bridge in Lemont.



Confirmation candidates helped serve the generously portioned, buffet-style meal



St. Francis Day Dinner a success

(Continued from page 1)

difficulty due to unforeseen financial crisis; the Larry Gorman Scholarship Fund to help children of deceased deacons fund their education; and the Continuing Education Fund to help those in the community who are seeking further studies to help enhance their ministry.

Deacon Dan Welter received the St. Francis Award during the dinner. He was recognized for the many contributions he has made to enhance the Diaconate community. Welter has served as the chairperson of the Diaconate Council and as immediate past chair, he sits on the council's

Executive Committee.

He is assigned to St. Josaphat Parish and is the Deanery Deacon Coordinator for Deanery B of Vicariate II. Welter has given workshops for the community at the St. Stephen Symposium and he is co-chair for the upcoming convocation in January.

Welter has served as part of the Chemical Dependency Advisory Team of the Diaconate community and is always ready to lend a compassionate ear for those in time of need.

He is a retired civil judge who has gone back to school to study canon law and is working for the archdiocese in the Office for Canonical Affairs.

“Dan has always been a voice of wisdom,” Fr. Mike said, “and a

great promoter of all things diaconal.”

Fr. Mike offered a special thanks to Bill and Anne Sterns who chaired the event. Others on the committee included Tony and Eileen Coco, Andy Beierwaltes, Kevin Hill, Ron Morowczynski, Richard Voytas and Dennis Colgan. John Rex did the ad book layout and Luis Trevino did the printing.

Next year, the St. Francis Day Dinner will be Oct. 3. Chairpersons will be Ron and Linda Morowczynski with Andy and Maggie Beierwaltes serving as co-chairs. There are many positions on the committee that need to be filled. Anyone interested in helping out can contact the Morowczynskis at (773) 585-2617 or the Beierwaltes at (847) 966-6961.

Seasonal preaching tips for Catholics Come Home

By Rev. Louis J. Cameli, STD

From mid-December through mid-January, over 2,000 TV ads will be aired with a targeted viewing audience of 9 million people. This is all done as part of the Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative. The ads are meant to invite Catholics who have disengaged from the Church or drifted from the practice of their faith to return.

Besides this media-driven invitation, parishes will extend their own welcome to those who decide to return. Parish and archdiocesan programs will accompany those who have returned to help them to reintegrate into the community of faith. The details for these elements of CCH can be found at our archdiocesan Web site.

Preachers will find the time when the TV ads are aired and the weeks after to be a special opportunity. Preachers can extend a welcome to those who are returning to the Church, especially at Christmastime, in a way that is both effective and affirming.

At the same time, preachers can address their parish communities and foster within them a sense of their own responsibility to invite, welcome and accompany Catholics who have been away. In other words, preaching in Advent-Christmastime can both welcome those who return and form those who have always been a part of the community. The brief notes that follow offer some possibilities for homily preparation.

Dec. 8, Immaculate Conception: Mary stood in the place of all humanity, when — at the message of the angel — she accepted the coming of the Savior among us as one like us in all things but sin. She stood for all of us, when she said, *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.* She cooperated and collaborated

with God's grace. We join ourselves to Mary, mother of the Lord and our mother as well. We offer ourselves with her in the great work of salvation. We bear and bring Jesus Christ to the whole world. In a particular way, we collaborate and bring the Lord to those who will return to the Church in this season because of the Catholics Come Home initiative. Through her intercession, we ask the Lord to make us apt instruments of his grace for all our brothers and sisters.

Dec. 13, Third Sunday of Advent: On this *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday, we claim and communicate the joy that belongs to us because of our confidence that the Lord is near, indeed, among us. That sense of the Lord's presence shapes us as a community of compassion and integrity. This is the gist of today's gospel dialogue of John the Baptist and his listeners. They ask, *What should we do?* His answer is simple, direct, and practical: live with compassion by sharing what you have and live with integrity by fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to you. To the extent that we are authentically living as a community of confident joy, of heart-felt compassion, and practical integrity, we will draw to ourselves and to the Lord all those who are looking for life. The Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative reminds us of our identity and our strength when we speak and invite others not just with words but with the witness of our lives.

Dec. 20, Fourth Sunday of Advent: As we move closer to the celebration of the birth of the Lord, we meet the significant people who surround his birth. Today, the gospel recounts the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, an event that is commemorated as the "Visitation." Two cousins, both of whom are pregnant, meet and greet each other. More significantly, they proclaim what God has done and what God is about to do for all humanity. Elizabeth cannot contain her joy and her amazement. She is filled with the Holy Spirit. She cries out in a loud voice and says, *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the*

fruit of your womb. Elizabeth intuits the coming of salvation. She already knows the one that Mary bears in her womb, in the words of the prophet Micah: *He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock...he shall be peace.*

Our faith is deeply personal but never private. When we have come to know the one who is our shepherd and our peace, we cannot bury that knowledge within us. We must speak his name, utter his praise, and share his life. In these weeks dedicated to the Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative, we join our voices with women and men of faith who have gone before us, and we stand ready to invite, receive, and welcome people in his name.

Dec. 25, Nativity of the Lord: It is always a preacher's dilemma to determine what to say on the "great" feasts. This year, the Catholics Come Home evangelization initiative offers some possibilities. It may be good to begin with an explicit word of welcome extended to visitors (families who travel and visit during this time, young adults home for the holidays), to those who are not ordinarily a part of the worshipping community, and to those who do not belong to the Church but have accompanied family or friends who do. Clearly state that it is a source of great joy to gather in the Lord's name as we celebrate his birth. Any of the Christmas readings can lead us to a consideration of the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, the Son of God come among us, Emmanuel, God-with-us. God comes among us, on our terms — even the most vulnerable terms as an infant — so that we can share God's own life. Jesus belongs to us, so that we can belong to him. In this spirit of belonging to him and to one another, we find the truest and deepest meaning of the Church. This is our family. This is our home. Despite its human flaws and the sometimes shocking failures of its members, our family and home of faith draws its strength and hope from the assured presence of Lord with us. On this feast, we are invited. We are gathered. We are welcomed. We are all called home.

December

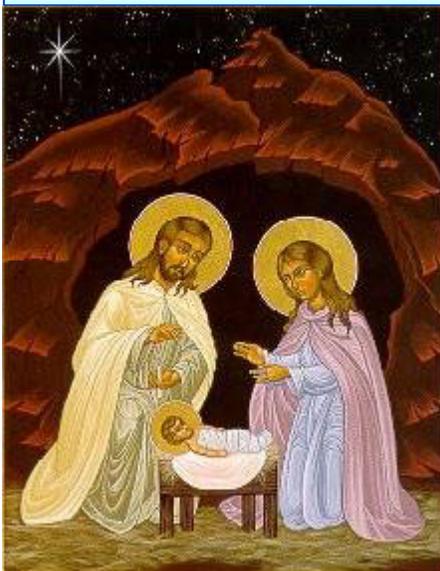
- 8 Immaculate Conception
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 12 Gridiron Warriors Benefit
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas

January:

- 1 New Year's Day
- 19 Liturgy classes begin (Spanish)
- 23-24 Convocation
- 24 10th Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 29-31 Retreat for deacons and wives

February

- 12-14 Retreat for deacons
- 17 Ash Wednesday
- 19-21 Retreat for deacons and wives (Spanish)

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