

THE FLAME

Volume 5 Number 5

www.ChicagoDeacons.org

October - November 2009

Bishop Gustavo urges a disciple role

By Richard Hudzik

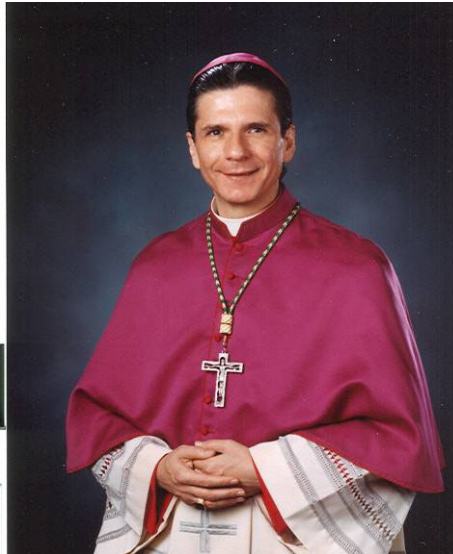
On August 18, I had the good fortune to sit down with Bishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, Episcopal Vicar of Vicariate V. This is a continuation of our series of interviews with our auxiliary bishops. The following are Bishop Gustavo's replies to the same questions previously posed to Bishops Paprocki, Rassas and Perry.

Q. Tell us something about yourself that we should know.

A. The biographical data that I pass out when people ask recites that I was born in 1956; ordained to the priesthood in 1984; and ordained to the episcopacy in 2003. My education was in both Mexico and the United States. I have served as United States Provincial Superior for my religious community, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit.

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Currently, I serve on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittees on Hispanic Affairs and the Subcommittee on African American Affairs. Also, I am USCCB Region VII Chairman.

However, in addition to that routine kind of information, as you ask me for "something the deacons might like to know about me," I can say that I have wanted to be a priest since I was a boy of 6 years old, growing up in the mining town of San Luis Potosi. In my faith life, I have a strong devotion to Mary. She has been key and important in my religious and priestly life. Additionally, the influence of my family and that of my religious community, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, have strongly shaped me. Further, in terms of "nonstandard types of biographical information," I have to say that a very significant moment in journeying with the Church has been the opportunity to ordain priests. To pass on the faith through the sacraments gives me great joy.

Q. Do you have any words to the

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Convocation plans moving ahead

By Dave Brencic

Planning for the first-ever Diaconate overnight convocation is moving forward.

The planning committee has firmed up the schedule for the convocation, which will be held Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 23-24, at the Intercontinental Chicago O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont. The idea is to bring the entire Diaconate community together for an extended time of prayer, education and fellowship. The overnight convocation will replace the annual St. Stephen Symposium and the Spring Convocation in 2010.

While the theme for the convocation has not yet been finalized, the committee is considering emphasizing the diversity and oneness of the Diaconate community.

"We need to celebrate our unity, but recognize our diversity," said Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate. "One of the real purposes of this is to express oneness as a Diaconate community."

Saturday will be a full day of prayer, speakers, meetings and an awards banquet.

Dr. Samuel Betances will give the keynote address in the morning. Betances has experience teaching at a university, has published articles and provided consultations with private and public organizations. He has challenged and motivated clients in Fortune 500 companies, governmental

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We want you home

Catholics come home! Catholics do you want to come home? That's a refrain we'll be hearing and asking a lot the next few months. Catholics Come Home is an official evangelization initiative being launched at the end of the year by the Chicago Archdiocese and the Dioceses of Joliet and Rockford.

Deacons are being asked to play a role in this effort as parish coordinators or helping the parish staff in reaching out to people who have been away from the church for whatever reason. Neighboring parishes without deacons also may need assistance with this effort.

We all know there are all kinds of reasons for people leaving the church. It might be a marital issue. Maybe a person was never properly catechized growing up and never received all of the

sacraments. Perhaps the person has been alienated by the clergy sex scandal or just had a falling out with someone at church. Maybe a person became disillusioned or disenchanted and just drifted away.

Catholics Come Home is making a huge push to turn things around to re-ignite the fire within people. And it's our job as deacons to be bearers of that flame.

Several years ago in my home parish of St. Barbara, Deacon Kevin Reynolds and I held several "listening" sessions, which we advertised in the bulletins of surrounding parishes and in the local newspapers. We just billed it as an opportunity for people to come and share their feelings, hurts and questions about the Catholic Church.

At the first session, we had more than a dozen people. The majority of people who came were from other parishes and

it was interesting to hear their stories. Many had bad experiences with the annulment process or with the sacrament of reconciliation. The people who came were hurting and they wanted someone to listen to their frustrations and woundedness.

At the end of the sessions, as representatives of the Catholic Church we apologized to the people for those hurts and told them we hoped it would be a beginning of a healing process. I don't know if people ended up rejoining the church, but at least they had a chance to vent and share their stories. That's our job as deacons to listen, to be the connection between people and God, and to always keep pointing the way to our Lord Jesus who is waiting with open arms to welcome all of us home.

Keep the fire burning,
Deacon Dave Brencic, editor

The Flame

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

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

Email:

DeaconNews@ArchChicago.org

The Flame is also viewable online at

www.deacons.archchicago.org

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

Te queremos en casa

Católicos, regresen a casa! Católicos, ¿quieren regresar a casa? Esta es la frase que estaremos escuchando a menudo en los próximos meses. Católicos, Regresen a Casa es una iniciativa oficial de evangelización que comenzará a fines de año, patrocinada por la Arquidiócesis y las Diócesis de Joliet y de Rockford.

Se les está pidiendo a los diáconos que jueguen un rol importante como coordinadores en las parroquias o ayudando al personal de la parroquia a llegar a las personas que han estado separadas de la iglesia por cualquier razón. Las parroquias cercanas que no tienen diáconos también necesitarán ayuda con este programa.

Sabemos que hay muchas razones por que las personas dejan la iglesia. Puede ser un problema matrimonial, talvez la persona no tuvo una buena catequesis cuando estaba creciendo y nunca recibió todos los sacramentos. Talvez la persona está desilusionada por los escándalos de los clérigos, o tuvo algún problema con alguno de la iglesia. Talvez la persona está desilusionada y se alejó de la iglesia.

Católicos Regresen a Casa está haciendo un gran esfuerzo para cambiar las cosas y volver a prender el fuego entre la gente. Y es nuestro trabajo como diáconos el ser portadores de esta llama.

Hace algunos años, en mi parroquia

de Santa Bárbara, el Diácono Kevin Reynolds y yo ofrecimos varias sesiones para "escuchar" y les hicimos propaganda en los boletines de las parroquias vecinas y en los periódicos locales. Dijimos que era una gran oportunidad para que la gente viniera a compartir sus sentimientos, heridas y preguntas que tenían acerca de la Iglesia Católica.

En la primera reunión tuvimos más de una docena de personas. La mayoría de la gente que vino era de otras parroquias y fue muy importante escuchar sus historias. Muchos tuvieron malas experiencias con el proceso de anulación matrimonial o con el sacramento de reconciliación. La gente que vino estaba herida y querían que alguien la escuchara en sus frustraciones y heridas.

Al final de las reuniones, como representantes de la Iglesia Católica les pedimos disculpas por esas heridas y les dijimos que esperábamos que esto fuera el comienzo de un proceso de sanación. No sé si la gente terminó volviendo a la Iglesia, pero por lo menos tuvieron la oportunidad de desahogarse y de compartir sus historias. Este es nuestro trabajo como diáconos, el de escuchar, el ser la conexión entre la gente y Dios, y de siempre seguir mostrándoles el camino hacia nuestro Señor Jesús quien nos está esperando con los brazos abiertos para darnos la bienvenida a casa.

Mantengan el fuego encendido,
Diácono Dave Brencic, editor

Views from the Vicar

Before writing about issues we face as a Diaconate Community, I want to say a few words on a personal note. As clergy, we are often asked to bless and pray for the sick. I have always considered this a very important part of my ministry. Recently things hit home for me as a dear friend was diagnosed with cancer of the bladder. When cancer hits someone you are close to, it is very different from what we do as ministers. Many of you have already experienced this. It has made me even more sensitive to what family members and friends go through when someone they are close to is hit with such a threatening illness. Please keep my friend Cynthia in your prayers.

The January Convocation: Our convocation committee is having regular meetings. As I write this, they are finalizing a schedule for the event and who the speakers will be. It will certainly be an historical event. It should enhance our esprit de corp as a Diaconate Community. It will provide opportunities for education, great liturgy and meeting old friends while making new ones within our community. It will certainly be the highlight of my tenure as vicar for the Diaconate Community. Some of the committees are publicity, hospitality, registration, liturgy, workshops and entertainment. If any deacon, wife or widow is interested in helping on one of these committees, please call the office and let us know.

Deacon Personnel Board: Our VDCs, along with Dennis Colgan and myself, are the Deacon Personnel Board. I am concerned that we are not doing this ministry as well as we should. We soon will be inquiring of those who have completed 10 years in an assignment about moving on. When people do desire to transfer, there is sometimes a challenge. Where the greatest need exists is also where fewest deacons are living. Where we have many deacons, the need is the smallest. It is frustrating to try to be helpful to both pastors needing a deacon, and to deacons needing a new parish. We need to radically improve our system. Perhaps someone outside the Deacon Office staff and VDCs should be

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Reflexiones del Vicario

Antes de escribir acerca de los problemas que encara nuestra Comunidad Diaconal, quiero decir unas palabras de algo personal. Como clérigos se nos pide rezar y bendecir a los enfermos. Siempre he considerado esto como una parte muy importante de mi ministerio. Recientemente tuve que enfrentarlo en lo personal, cuando una muy querida amiga fue diagnosticada con cáncer en la vejiga. Cuando alguien muy cercano a ti es diagnosticado con cáncer, es muy diferente de lo que hacemos como ministros. Probablemente muchos de ustedes ya lo han experimentado. Me ha hecho más sensitivo a lo que los miembros de las familias y los amigos pasan cuando alguien muy cercano a ellos tiene esta terrible



enfermedad. Por favor tengan a mi amiga Cynthia en sus oraciones.

La Convocación de Enero Nuestro comité para la convocación se está reuniendo regularmente. Mientras escribo esto, ellos están ya finalizando el programa para este evento. Esta reunión va a enriquecer nuestro espíritu como Comunidad Diaconal. Nos ofrecerá oportunidades para educación, una gran liturgia y encontrarnos con viejos amigos mientras hacemos unos nuevos. Realmente va a ser el punto cúspide de mi trabajo como vicario de la Comunidad Diaconal. Algunos de los comités son: publicidad, hospitalidad, inscripción, liturgia, seminarios y entretenimiento. Si algún diácono, esposa o viuda está interesada en ayudar con esos comités, por favor llamen a la oficina para avisarnos.

Junta de Personal del Diaconado Nuestros

Representantes de Vicariato junto con Dennis Colgan y yo, somos la Junta de Personal. Estoy preocupado de que no estamos haciendo bien nuestro trabajo. Pronto estaremos llamando a los diáconos que han cumplido sus 10 años de asignación y necesitan trasladarse. Aún cuando las personas desean cambiarse de asignación, de todas maneras es un desafío. Donde hay más necesidad es también donde no hay muchos diáconos que viven en esas áreas. En cambio donde viven muchos diáconos, la necesidad es menor. Es frustrante tratar de ayudar a los pastores que necesitan un diácono y a los diáconos que necesitan una nueva parroquia. Tenemos que mejorar nuestro sistema radicalmente. Talvez alguien fuera de nuestro personal y de los representantes de vicariato, debería trabajar en esto. Si estás interesado en conversar sobre esto, por favor llámame.

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Couples invited to celebrate marriage

Join with Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate, and many married deacons and their wives at the Celebrating Marriage: An Evening to Remember event Saturday, Oct. 17, as part of this year's Festival of Faith at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont.

The evening will include 5 p.m. Mass, followed by a presentation, comedy skit, music, dancing, food and a raffle. There will also be a special recognition of the Diaconate community that has done so much to support marriage.

Go to the Family Ministries Web site www.familyministries.org for more information and to register. For parishes that fill one table (five couples) or more, we will make a special table sign for the parish so all the couples can sit together.

For more information, contact Frank Hannigan, director of Family Ministries, (312) 534-8351.

Preaching workshop

The Liturgical Institute of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake is presenting a one-day workshop for priests and deacons titled "Profound Preaching, Why Preach? Encountering God's Word."

The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6, in the Conference Center. The presenter will be Fr. Peter John Cameron, OP Professor of Homiletics at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. Father Cameron is an author, homilist and playwright.

Registration is \$60. An optional dinner is \$12. Make checks payable to the Liturgical Institute. More information can be found at www.liturgicalinstitute.org.

Retreat for Life scheduled

Deacons, parish pro-life ministers and concerned laity are invited to a pro-life retreat at Cardinal Stritch Retreat House beginning Friday evening December 4, through Sunday, December 6, 2009. Rev. James Heyd and Katrina Zeno will be the featured presenters.

Titled "A Challenge for Our Day: Building a Culture of Life and Love," this weekend provides an opportunity to renew and refresh the spirituality and energies of those involved in witnessing to the Gospel of Life amidst a hostile society.

Ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1989, Fr. Heyd holds a B.A. in History and English from the University of Notre Dame, plus a M. Div. and S.T.L. from University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary. Formerly associated with Priests for Life, earlier this year Fr. Heyd was appointed Cardinal George's delegate for pro-life ministry.

Katrina Zeno is a well-published freelance writer whose articles can be found in Our Sunday Visitor, Catholic Faith and Family, Pentecost Today, and Franciscan Way, and on-line at Christianity.com. Katrina served as co-host for a 13-part series on Theology of the Body for EWTN. She has spoken in the US, Canada, England, and Trinidad at parishes, retreat centers, and national conferences and is co-founder of Women of the Third Millennium. Specializing in the Theology of the Body, the single life, the genius of women and passing on the faith, Katrina Zeno brings a dynamic and personal dimension to her speaking.

Reservations may be made by calling Cardinal Stritch Retreat House at (847) 566-6060, or contact Deacon Chick O'Leary at (773) 775-6659 for more information.

Convocation plans progress

(Continued from page 1)

agencies, community groups, community colleges, universities, lecture series and commencement events, according to his biographical information..

In the afternoon, Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., will speak with the Diaconate community. Following the cardinal, there will be workshops for participants to attend. Themes will reflect the convocation theme.

Ending the afternoon will be vicariate meetings where deacons will have an opportunity to meet with the Episcopal vicars and the VDCs.

Deacon Sal Lema noted the meetings will be "an opportunity for the bishops to present any pet projects they want to push or talk about since they will have the majority of their guys there."

The day will end with a banquet and entertainment. During the banquet, the ministerial awards for the year will be presented.

On Sunday, Cardinal George will return to the convocation to celebrate Mass. The day will end with a "town hall meeting" with the executive committee of the Diaconate Council.

Cost for overnight accommodations will be \$89 per room. Three meals will be included.

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 participate or not.

Registration will be Saturday morning, but early registration will be allowed Friday evening. There also are plans to have a variety of vendors on-site during the

Mandated reporter sessions offered

The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth will continue to offer Mandated Reporter training to all those who are mandated by state law to report suspected child abuse and neglect, as well as to all staff identified by archdiocesan guidelines as being mandated to report.

The following archdiocesan employees and volunteers must attend this training:

- All school employees
- Clergy
- Youth ministers
- Religious Education personnel and volunteers

To properly accommodate participants, registration must be received at least seven business days prior to the scheduled training. Seating is limited. Walk-ins will not be allowed to attend the training. Because of the content of the material, sessions will begin on time and late arrivals will not be admitted. Due to the subject matter, no minors under the age of 18 will be permitted to attend.

To register, email Regina Robinson at

rrobinson@archchicago.org or call (312) 534-5254.

The sessions are as follows:

- ... Oct. 13: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Seton Academy 16100 Seton Road, South Holland
- ... Oct. 13: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Emily 1400 E. Central Road, Mount Prospect
- ... Oct. 28: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, 1500 Wadsworth Road Wadsworth
- ... Nov. 3: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary of the Angels, 1850 N Hermitage Ave. Chicago.
- ... Nov. 5: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Marian Catholic 700 Ashland Ave Chicago Heights.
- ... Nov. 9: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Gerald School, 9320 S. 55th Court, Oak Lawn (not handicap accessible)
- ... Nov. 9: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick High School, 5900 W. Belmont Chicago
- ... Nov. 12: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Cardinal Joseph Bernardin School, 9250 W 167 St Orland Hills
- ... Nov. 17: 4 to 6:30 p.m. at Christ the King, Jesuit College Prep, 116 N. LeClaire Chicago

Ministry classes available

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, or jmoyeno@archchicago.org.

Annulment training session planned

The Family Ministries Office will be sponsoring a session in [Annulment Support Ministry Training](#) from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct., 24, at St. Patrick Church, 991 S. Waukegan Road, Lake Forest.

The program is for parish ministers and volunteers to learn to assist others to prepare an annulment case for the Chicago Tribunal. For more information, visit www.familyministries.org.



Diaconate community celebrates ordination

On the hottest weekend of the summer, the Diaconate community gathered for the annual Festival of Ordination at St. Barbara Parish.

This year, the silver jubilee class of 1984 was honored, along with the newly ordained class of 2009. Assisting Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar, at the Mass of Celebration were deacons Frank Beil and Kevin Hill.



Hill, Robert Landuyt, Donald Maiers, James Minor, John Orzechowski, Barry Schliesmann, William Schultz, Lawrence Schumacher, Edward Simola, Timothy Springer, Allen Tataro, Joseph Walsh and Thomas Westerkamp.

In a message to the community, Fr. Mike said: "I know we have a most talented and generous community in which I have great pride ... I challenge all of you from the oldest to the newly ordained to find new ways to reach the marginalized and alienated. This is your special gift and call."



Those in the class of 1984 who were recognized included: Ray J. Behrendt, Frank Beil, John Burt, Vito DiCanio, Robert Gagnon, Terry Norton, Arthur Nylen,



Newly ordained Deacon Kevin Hill (vested in the center above) assisted Fr. Mike Ahlstrom at the Mass for the Festival of Ordination. Deacon Chris poses at the grill while others work to prepare the food that had people lining up.

Reflexiones del Vicario

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Senior Deacons ya han debido recibir una carta mía al leer esto. Hay una confusión acerca de quien es un senior deacon y que es lo que se requiere de él. Tenemos que recordar que esto no es algo automático cuando uno cumple los 70 años. El individuo, no el párroco, debe pedirlo. Tampoco esperamos que todos sean senior deacons. Tenemos diáconos de 80 y 90 años que están completamente activos. Si no has recibido la carta y piensas que eres senior deacon, o necesitas alguna clarificación, llámanos. También estamos anunciando la nueva póliza en nuestra red digital, por si acaso alguno perdió la carta que les envié durante el verano.

Correo Electrónico Me da pena decir que solo 10% de los diáconos están abriendo su correo electrónico de la arquidiócesis regularmente. Algunos lo borran sin siquiera abrirlo (Talvez lo tienen dirigido a su correo regular- pero de todas maneras periódicamente tienen que abrir su correo de la arquidiócesis para vaciarlo.) Tuve la esperanza de que esta sería una nueva manera de comunicación, pero todavía nos queda mucho tiempo para aceptarlo. De la misma manera creo que nuestra red digital necesita su atención también. Me parece que tampoco está siendo utilizado por muchos de nuestra comunidad. Pete Lagges hizo un gran trabajo en hacerla funcionar para nosotros. Ahora necesitamos que otros se hagan cargo de ella. De nuevo, si estás interesado, llámanos.

La bendición de Dios sobre todos ustedes

Padre Michael Ahlstrom

Views from the Vicar

(Continued from page 3)

working with this. If you are interested in talking about this, please call me.

Senior Deacons: Our senior deacons should have received a letter from me by the time you read this. There is some confusion as to who is a senior deacon and what is required. We need to remember that this is not automatic when you turn 70 years old. The individual, not the pastor, must request it. Nor is there an expectation that anyone become a senior deacon. We have deacons in their 80s and 90s who are fully active. If you did not receive a letter and think you are a senior, or need any clarification, call us. We also are posting the policy on our Web site if you lost what I mailed to everyone during the summer.

Email: I am sad to report only about 10% of our deacons are opening their archdiocesan email on a consistent basis. Some are deleting without reading. (Perhaps they had their email forwarded --- they still need to periodically empty their archdiocesan mailbox.) I had hoped this would be a new vehicle for communication, but we have a long way to go. Similarly I believe our **Web site** needs continuous attention if it is to serve us well. Again I believe it is not utilized by that many in our community. Pete Lagges has done a great job in setting this up for us. We need others to take it over. Again if you have an interest in making a contribution please call us.

*God's blessing on you all,
Father Michael Ahlstrom*

Emmaus session to focus on Luke

Sister Laurie Brink, OP, will present an all-day workshop on "The one who comes to me, Listens to my words, and acts on them." (Luke 6:47) -- Defining Discipleship in Luke's Gospel" as part of the Emmaus program on Saturday, Nov. 21

The session, which is open to all deacons, will be held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Bernardine, 7246 W. Harrison in Forest Park. Registration and lunch will be in the school cafeteria with the presentation in the church. This meeting will count as two sessions and there will be no meeting in January. The cost is \$12.50 per person to cover lunch.

The Gospel of Luke provides some of the best-known and loved stories in the New Testament. Here we find the angels and shepherds at Jesus' birth. The parable of the Samaritan challenges us to broaden our understanding of neighbor. The vertically challenged Zacchaeus climbs a tree in order to see Jesus. A master storyteller, Luke is also a provocative theologian.

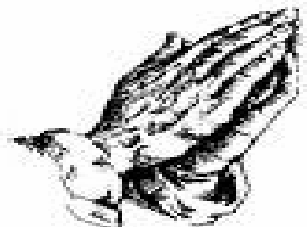
This workshop will explore the parables and unusual characters that Luke introduces and how they upset a too facile interpretation of the Gospel. Widows aren't always helpless (Luke 18:1-5). Crafty stewards are praised (Luke 16:1-8). And soldiers are admired for their faith (Luke 7: 1-10).

How did Luke intend his community to hear these stories? What challenges do they present for us? Discipleship for Luke is a process of attending to Jesus, listening intently and acting on those insights. How do we translate Luke's challenging invitation to our parishioners today? For more information, contact the Diaconate Office at (708) 366-8900.

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have gone to the Lord recently, Dcn Jerry Kwasegroch '77, Ann Ray, wife of the late Dcn Fred Ray '84, Mary Mauch, wife of the late Dcn Richard Mauch '77, Dcn. Rafael Donates '85, and Roberto Del Llano, son of Deacon Manuel '96 and Maria Del Llano.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers:, Robert Devereux, Susan Winblad, Olyssa Sassetti, niece of, Janet Studer, wife of the late Dcn Marvin Studer '85, Ed Ryan, Frank and Blanche DeVita, Joe McDonnell , José Vazquez, Bienvenido Nieves, Maria Del Llano, Soledad Muñoz, Jim Deiters, Marvin Kocar, 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-Kolski and Mary Gronkiewicz.



Bishop Gustavo

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deacons to call them to a higher or new or better service? What would you like to see the deacons do that they are not now doing? How can deacons better serve the Archdiocese of Chicago? Related to that, how can deacons better understand that they are ordained for the archbishop and not for the parish? How can the deacons better serve the bishops?

A. I want to take these various questions together as one inquiry and provide one answer. You are correct in the hesitation to find the right word – “doing” or “higher” or “better” does not seem to fit. What I would say is that the deacon needs to be evidently a disciple and missionary of Jesus Christ. That is the area where I would like to see deacons expand in their awareness.

To approach what I mean, you might ask yourself about how the parish views the deacon. They see him act liturgically on Sunday, but do they also connect him as a disciple and missionary of Jesus Christ? Is the deacon known to be one who wants to tell others about Jesus the Lord? Is he one whose life reflects that Jesus Christ is the one who means everything to the deacon? Does his marriage reflect that? The deacon should focus his efforts in these areas – to be that disciple and to be that missionary. The idea of fulfilling a diaconal function – whether liturgically or otherwise – should be subordinated in favor of seeking the identity of disciple.

With regard to the service in the parish, the deacon must remember that he is called to serve Jesus Christ and the Church – not just the parish. The service is to Jesus Christ in the first instance. The local parish is simply an instantiation of Jesus Christ’s mission among us. Again, the missionary in the deacon calls him to go wherever there is a need,

wherever God’s people are.

It might even help the deacon to think in terms of vicariate-wide concerns. What is needed in the area? How might I serve there, even if it is not in the parish where I was initially assigned? The deacon needs to be creative in discerning where he might be best used by those whom he is to serve. That is part of the mind of the missionary – to discern where and how best to serve. It may indeed take the deacon beyond the parish boundaries.

Further, the Diaconate needs to be expressed in terms consistent with the signs of the times. For example, given the present economic turmoil, is there something deacons, especially those with expertise in financial and business matters, might have been able to do in connection with the many mortgage foreclosures our people face? Or how do deacons proactively involve themselves in problems relating to violence in our cities, to immigration issues, to serve the jobless? How do the deacons reach the young? Likely, they are fathers – what does fatherhood tell them to do to solve problems of the young before they reach unmanageable terms?

I return again to what motivates the deacon. He is a missionary of Jesus Christ, and like Him, he has to have the poor and marginalized in his mind constantly. He has to have that preferential inclination for the poor.

Q. This is a question inviting your reflection on how the three diaconal gifts of word, altar and service interact and reinforce one another. If the Diaconate is primarily envisioned in terms of its charity, its liturgical service and its teaching function, do you personally argue for any priorities here? Any “first among equals” or ought we hold the three gifts in harmony and balance?

A. Again, your hesitancy in

ordering or ranking the offices of the deacon is noted and is appropriate. The ministries of word, altar and service are attended to in a holistic way and what is essential and common to each is the element of service. The deacon is a servant. As seen in Acts, the deacons serve, so as to allow other ministries. It is still the case today. Whatever the deacon does, it is to be motivated by the idea of service. For example, the deacon’s presence on the altar is for the purpose of helping to connect people to God and to one another in the context of worship and praise. It is for service. The same is true with regard to the deacon’s ministry in teaching or the Word. That is to arise out of the willingness to serve others. That is what a disciple of Jesus Christ does. Service undergirds the deacon’s life.

Finally, I want to be sure the deacons are encouraged to engage in ongoing formation. Although the people of God will teach us many things about God, there can be a possibility of being so constantly engaged that fresh ideas about serving the people elude us. All of us need to further our education, as well as go on retreats, so as not to be bogged down. Faith formation is a lifetime process for a disciple and missionary of Jesus Christ.

Q. How do you view the deacons’ wives’ role in the ministry of their husbands?

A. Although each wife may choose her own path with respect to her husband’s diaconal vocation, every married deacon, by virtue of being married, has the opportunity to teach the church a great deal. It is the marriage itself, which testifies to how to live in unity. In a world and Church too often fractured by disunity, the married couple must serve as a sign of what is possible. The married couple, in their unity, is a leaven, which will spread throughout the Church and the world to show us all how we might

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Bishop Gustavo

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live. One of the marks of the Church is that it is “one.” The Church is “one” when it has unity. Although unity begins and finds its source in God, one of the manifestations of God’s uniting love is the married couple. Perhaps as people look at the deacon and see a disciple, the people might look at the deacon and his wife as a sign of what is possible, as a sign of unity. Their joy in each other should foster the hunger in others for that same joy and unity. The married deacons have that gift, which they can share with those of us who seek unity.

Another contribution from the wives, one that is presented in their own persons, rather than as spouse, is their femininity. The Church needs to breathe with the gifts of all her people. If women have gifts differing from men – obviously, their ability to be mothers, for

example – the holiness arising from motherhood is something which they must teach the rest of us. If one were to say that the feminine is peculiarly in touch with the gentleness and compassion of Jesus the Lord, we are impoverished to the extent we do not receive that wisdom. Whether we are male or female, we all need to invite, rather than command. We all need to be contemplative and pondering, just as Mary was.

Q. Are there any particular areas that you see the need for greater involvement of deacons on the level of parish, vicariate or society in general (i.e., where should deacons be more involved)?

A. As I mentioned earlier, I would encourage the deacons to think in terms of vicariate-wide responses. Where there is violence on the streets or economic dislocation, they might be the disciples of Jesus who are there responding to and, even better, anticipating needs.

Q. How should deacons pray?

A. There are many beautiful ways of praying in our Catholic tradition. The Holy Spirit leads the particular individual or the community to develop a friendship with God and find ways to connect with Him. However, I will venture to invite people to explore at least two venues of approaching God. One is to be mindful that God is always with us - the Lord in our midst. No matter what the situation is of the person, God is there. Secondly, I suggest that through “loving attention to God,” one has a mode of praying, which is more than intellectual knowledge of God. Rather, we gaze at Him in loving attention with mind and heart at work. It is an affective seeking and looking at God.

With these two ways of being and praying we have the opportunity of seeking God at all times. It is true that we can always pray.

Bishop Gustavo and Cardinal Hummes

Bishop Gustavo’s nuanced words for the Chicago diaconate might be distilled into several essential elements. The bishop calls the deacon to be, first and foremost, an evangelizing disciple of Jesus Christ. That is to say, the deacon’s identity is to be, in the first instance, one who wants to share the Good News of Jesus. When the community sees the deacon, the community should see this disciple-evangelizer-deacon. Moreover, the deacon is to be a prayerful servant, one who continues his studies of the faith and one who keeps the poor at the forefront of his ministry of service.

How remarkable then it was to interview Bishop Gustavo and hear his passionate and articulate challenge to the diaconate – remarkable in that Bishop Gustavo’s remarks so closely parallel the letter to deacons from Claudio Cardinal Hummes, Prefect of the

Congregation for the Clergy. Cardinal Hummes’ letter (available online at <http://www.zenit.org/article-26622?l=english>) was issued in honor of the Feast of St. Lawrence and only a week before the Bishop Gustavo interview.

In his letter, the cardinal asks deacons to be evangelizers whose inspiration arises from their status as disciples of Jesus Christ. Like Bishop Gustavo, Cardinal Hummes asks deacons to ground their identity in the person of Jesus Christ. Further, Cardinal Hummes asks deacons to be men who continue always to study the Word of God, so that they might hope to be equipped to be missionaries. Finally, Cardinal Hummes asks that deacons “identify themselves in a very special way with charity.” The Cardinal reminds us that “The poor are part of your daily ambiance. One could not understand a deacon who did not personally involve himself in charity and solidarity toward the poor...”

Having already read Cardinal Hummes’ letter at the time of the Bishop Gustavo interview, I was struck by the overlap in the approaches of Bishop Gustavo and Cardinal Hummes. I asked the bishop if he were taking his inspiration from Cardinal Hummes’ letter. However, Bishop Gustavo had not yet read the Hummes letter. Bishop Gustavo’s comments arose from his own reflection and study. Again, the similarity of the understandings is remarkable. Perhaps these two leaders are articulating a clear direction for our ministry and identity as deacons. We are to be prayerful disciples of Jesus Christ who spread his Good News; we are steeped in study, especially study of the Word of God; and we are fully attentive to the poor in our midst. Only with the grace of God and with the support of our wives and families and communities might we hope to begin to live out this all-encompassing calling.

Deacon Richard Hudzik

Diaconate Council Notes September 12, 2009

Council president Dave Egan discussed need for Diaconate participation in the Catholics Come Home project. Fr. Mike Ahlstrom continued on the subject with supplemental comments of Bill Stearns as to implementation on the parish level. An open discussion followed.

- Fr. Ahlstrom and Egan presented status on the Mandated Reporter training: 378 of 600 deacons enrolled to date. Efforts are being made to offer more training sites and time opportunities
- Stearns gave a St. Francis Day Report: \$12,953 received to date
Smaller ad book anticipated
Deadline extended to Sept. 18th. All are urged to make personal telephone contacts
- Egan, Dan Welter and Dennis Colgan gave report on Convocation.
- Colgan gave report on St. Lawrence Day: Meager attendance of newly ordained deacons (only 125 people attended).
Reminder that it can be held indoors if the weather in inclement.
Egan raised issue if it should continue in view of low attendance. If so, Saturday or Sunday?
Advance notices needed because of vacations, etc.
Tentative dates are for the weekend of Aug. 7/8, 2010.
- Egan gave chairman's report.

– Open discussion:

P. Virusso: Is attendance at Convocation mandatory? What are the consequences of nonattendance? Mandatory or highly expected? We need a greater incorporation of "post-ordination" obligations and activities into the pre-ordination training especially because of small participation of new ordinands.

- Fr. Ahlstrom gave his Vicar's Report:
Issues: Assistance needed in development of Web site.
Activity of Personal Board Convocation
41 new Pastors, some problematic areas are developing
Email through Archdiocesan Web site - lack of use.
 - D. Colgan gave Associate Director report:
Seeking St. Francis Day ads
Continuing education program on St. Luke at Center on Nov. 26. Cost is \$12.50
 - D. Egan: open to DDC reports on visits.
P. Spalla and Frank Biel gave reports.
 - An open discussion as to the Convocation issues resumed.
Motion that council pay up to \$1,000 for the cost of one "break" approved.
- Next meeting Nov. 14.

In Memoriam



Deacon Gerard J. Kwasegroch

Deacon Gerard J. Kwasegroch, '77, passed away on Sunday, Sept. 13. Deacon Jerry was ordained on May 21, 1977, and was assigned to St. Eugene Parish for the entirety of his Diaconate ministry. A naval veteran of World War II, Deacon Jerry was most active with the parish's Extraordinary Ministers and Ministers of Care. Fr. Phil Grib recalled that Deacon Jerry was always quick to visit those who were ill and was frequently seen at Resurrection Medical Center and making home visitations.

Though Deacon Jerry retired from active ministry in December 2005, he remained a valued voice of experience and wisdom for the St. Eugene Pastoral staff. He is survived by his wife Rita, brother Joseph, three children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ecumenical events on tap

Here are upcoming Ecumenical and Interreligious events:

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 16-17: 2009 Catholic Festival of Faith - Ecumenical and Interreligious Workshops:

Friday, 2:25 p.m. - "What is Interreligious Learning" - Chicago Coalition for InterReligious Learning/Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

Saturday, 12:45 p.m. - "Parish-Based Lutheran and Muslim Dialogue: Success Stories - Started and Sustained" - Deacon John Lorbach, Gail Radtke, Dalila Benameur, Andreatte Brachman, Sr. Joan McGuire, Sr. Mary Ellen Coombe

Sunday and Monday, Nov. 8-9: 2nd Hidden Treasures: Spiritual Wisdom through the Voices of Women in Judaism, Christianity and Islam at Catholic Theological Union 5416 S. Cornell Ave., Chicago

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

Sunday, Jan. 24, 4 to 5 p.m. 10th Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Chicago Ecumenical Prayer Service. Location TBA

Wednesday, March 10, from 7 to 9 p.m. 15th Annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture Speaker: Fr. Daniel Harrington, S.J., at Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies 610 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

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

News from Cardinal Stritch Retreat House

By Richard Hudzik

In the event our summer mailing to you has gone astray, I would like to reiterate a few items of news regarding Stritch, as well as remind you of the new retreat calendar.

First, we renew a hearty welcome to the Class of 2009 and invite you to join in retreats with the Chicago Diaconate community at Stritch. All members of the Diaconate can make reservations here at Stritch for preached retreats or private or directed retreats. All you need to do is call (when you call, it helps in the billing process if you give us your deacon ID number). If you prefer the Spanish language preached retreats, you can register for those at the monthly meetings of the Spanish-speaking deacons.

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

Third, consider whether Stritch might host your parish's faith formation or RCIA retreats or staff meetings. We would be delighted to work with you on a tailor-made event where we design meals as requested and provide for your overnight or longer stays. A number of parishes presently meet here as they convene planning and calendaring retreats for staff and others. Also, several parish prayer groups meet here, as do Christ Renews His Parish reunion retreats and Twelve Step retreats.

Fourth, listed below is the retreat calendar. Please also remember that our Web site at www.stritchretreat.org has many

details about the retreats and other information. As you review this information, know that it is always our endeavor to find retreat directors who will feed you spiritually and provide you the rest and quiet you need to grow in your walk as disciples of Jesus. It will help us in our planning if we hear from you soon with your registrations.

Oct. 9-11: Deacons and Wives. Fr. Mike Ahlstrom preaching.

Oct. 23-35: Deacons and Wives. A Spanish language retreat.

Nov. 20-22: Deacons. Fr. Patrick Lagges preaching on "Advent As A Season of Hope." Until recently, Fr. Lagges was Judicial Vicar for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Presently, he is chaplain at the University of Chicago's Calvert House, the Catholic students' center.

Jan. 15-17: Deacons and Wives. Fr. Dominic Grassi, pastor of St. Gertrude's and noted author, will be preaching.

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

Feb. 19-21: Deacons and Wives. A Spanish language retreat.

April 16-18: Deacon Wives and Widows.

May 21-23: Deacons and Wives. A Spanish language retreat.

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

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

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

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

October

- 4 St. Francis Day Celebration
at Elmcrest Banquets
- 6 Mandated reporter training
- 9 Mandated reporter training
- 9-11 Deacons and wives retreat
- 10 Conflict prevention/conflict
resolution workshop
- 13 Mandated reporter training
- 16-17 Catholic Festival of Faith -
Ecumenical and
Interreligious Workshops.
- 24 Annulment training
- 23-25 Deacons and wives Spanish
retreat
- 28 Mandated reporter training

November

- 3 Mandated reporter training
- 5 Mandated reporter training
- 6 Preaching workshop
- 9 Mandated reporter training
- 12 Mandated reporter training
- 17 Mandated reporter training
- 20-22 Advent retreat by Fr.
Patrick Lagges
- 26 Thanksgiving

**Access The Flame
online at
deacons.archchicago.org**

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