



THE FLAME

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February - March 2010

Convocation revitalizes Diaconate community

By Dave Brencic

With the theme, "We are One Faith, One Community, One Future," Chicago's Diaconate community proved it with its first overnight convocation that saw the largest gathering ever of deacons and wives in the United States.

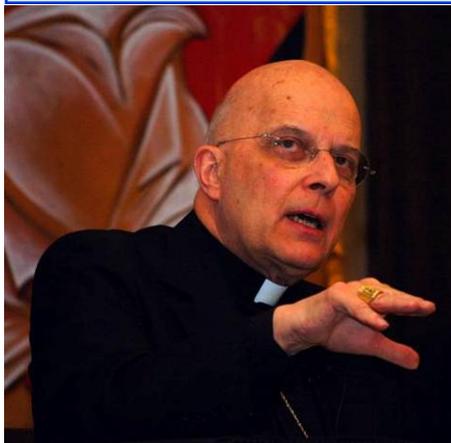
Close to 400 deacons originally registered for the convocation, along with some 250 wives. Walk-ins on Saturday swelled the number attending to close to 700 people.

"I believe that this weekend will be one of the biggest, if not the biggest moments of my 40 years (as a priest)," said Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar, in welcoming Chicago's Diaconate community. "The love, the energy and the passion in this room are unbelievable."

After praying morning prayer as a community, the convocation revved into high gear with a rousing

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Cardinal dialogues with deacons



Francis Cardinal George makes a point at the Deacons' Convocation.

Photos by Deacon Dan Dietsch

By Dave Brencic

Cardinal Francis George, OMI, lauded the work of deacons in the Chicago Archdiocese, raised issues and fielded questions during his dialogue with the Diaconate community at the Overnight Convocation.

Cardinal George began by discussing two initiatives involving deacons: the Catholics Come Home (CCH) effort launched in December, and a recent move to involve deacons in the role of "peace makers."

The cardinal said he was glad many deacons have taken on roles as CCH coordinators in their parishes. He also noted that following up with people who make inquiries will be extremely important.

Cardinal George said the archdiocese has received a lot of anecdotal feedback, but no

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Outstanding ministry honored, recognized

By Dave Brencic

The Diaconate community honored its own once again with recognition of outstanding ministerial service.

This year's St. Stephen the Deacon Award was given to Deacon Jose Alvarez. Awarded to a deacon whose life and ministry exemplifies the spirit of St. Stephen, the first deacon, Alvarez was recognized for his many diverse talents ranging from construction to counseling.

"He has served the parish in whatever capacity was needed at the moment from janitor to presider of prayer, from counselor to teacher of CCD, RCIA, baptism prep, marriage prep and domestic violence and parental responsibility. He took a lead role in the parish evangelization efforts," wrote his pastor in the nomination letter.

"His sage advice has been especially helpful to me over the years as we merged parishes and faced critical financial situations. He is a thankful servant of God's grace and a willing servant for the Lord."

Other award winners included Miguel Valle, St. Genevieve, Chicago, for the St. Philip Award; Barbara Manning, St. George, Tinley Park, for the St. Priscilla Award; Daniel Patino, Our Lady of Lourdes, Chicago, and Frank Gildea, St. Elizabeth Seton, Orland Hills, for the St. Lawrence Award; and Jim and Rose Ernst, Our Lady of Hope, Des Plaines, and Jim and Pat Revord of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glenview for Shared Ministry Recognition.

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What a gift

I guess you could call it an early Christmas gift from God.

It was the first official weekend of the Catholics Come Home campaign. After breakfast, I decided to brave the cold and go for a walk since I was not scheduled for Mass until 11 a.m. Walking out the door, I grabbed several invitation cards and brochures that our parish had printed up specifically for Catholics Come Home. The idea was to give a card and brochure to someone we knew who was no longer coming to church and invite them to accompany us at Mass during the Christmas season.

There was one woman on my walking route who I had been trying

to get back to church for several years. Her husband had died about five years ago. I don't know all the details, but for some reason she had some hard feelings against the church. Since it was early, I dropped the invite card in her mailbox and continued home to get ready for church.

Later when I went to the entrance of church to greet people before Mass, I was stunned to see the woman sitting in the pew and talking with one of our ushers. I went up to her, hugged her and told her how wonderful it was to see her. She said she read the invitation and brochure and decided to come to Mass that very morning. With tears in her eyes, she told me she had thought about coming back for awhile, but it was never the right

time. She still felt "very fragile inside."

I told her to call me if she ever needed anything or just wanted someone to talk with. She said she wasn't sure if she would be able to make it through Mass, but would try. Thankfully, she stayed. Afterward, she came up to me again with tears in her eyes and thanked me and said she hoped to be back. As she walked away, I noticed that she had pinned one of the Catholics Come Home buttons on her jacket.

I can't describe the joy in my heart that morning. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! What a gift indeed.

Keep the fire burning,

Deacon Dave Brencic, editor

The Flame

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¡Que regalo!

Me imagino que se podría llamar un regalo anticipado de Dios, por Navidad.

Fue en el primer fin de semana oficial de la campaña Católicos Volviendo a Casa. Después del desayuno, decidí enfrentarme el frío y salir a caminar, ya que no tenía que asistir a la Misa hasta las 11 de la mañana. Al salir, decidí llevar conmigo algunas invitaciones y folletos que nuestra parroquia había hecho imprimir específicamente para esta campaña. La idea era de dar una tarjeta o un folleto a alguien que sabíamos que no estaba asistiendo a la iglesia desde algún tiempo e invitarlos a acompañarnos en la Misa durante la temporada de Navidad.

En mi camino, había una señora a la que yo estaba tratando de que regresara a la iglesia por años. Su esposo había muerto hacía cinco años. Yo no sabía todos los detalles, pero por alguna razón ella tenía algún enojo contra la iglesia. Como era temprano, yo dejé una invitación en su buzón y regresé a casa para alistarme para ir a la iglesia.

Mas tarde cuando fui a la entrada de la iglesia a saludar a la

gente antes de misa, quedé sorprendido al ver a la señora sentada en uno de los bancos y conversando con uno de nuestros ujieres. Me acerqué y la abracé, diciéndole lo maravilloso que era el verla allí. Ella me dijo que leyó la invitación y el folleto y decidió asistir a la misa ese mismo día. Con lágrimas en los ojos me contó que ella había pensado en volver a la iglesia desde hacía algún tiempo, pero que nunca encontraba el tiempo apropiado. Me dijo que todavía se sentía "muy frágil por dentro."

Le dije que me llamara si alguna vez necesitaba algo o alguien con quien conversar. Dijo que no estaba segura de poder quedarse toda la misa, pero que lo intentaría. Gracias a Dios, ella se quedó. Después ella se me acercó y con lágrimas en los ojos me agradeció y dijo que volvería. Al alejarse, me di cuenta de que había prendido en su abrigo uno de los botones de Católicos Volviendo a Casa.

No puedo describir la felicidad que llenaba mi corazón esa mañana. ¡Bendito sea Dios que nos llena de bendiciones!

Mantengan el fuego encendido,

Diácono David Brencic, editor

Views from the Vicar

Congratulations! On Feb. 14, four men were ordained to the Diaconate. We are proud to welcome them, their wives, and their children into our Diaconate community!

This is a good time for a reminder we all need to do what we can to promote more vocations to the Diaconate and to the priesthood. These are two very different but complementary vocations. Currently, our total numbers of deacons are slightly increasing, but the numbers of active deacons are decreasing because of the number of men who are becoming senior deacons or who are retiring. In

particular, we need to encourage more men of color to become deacons. In the future, an ever-increasing part of the Church will be Latin American, African and Asian. The numbers of those preparing for the Diaconate who are Latino, Asian, and especially black are disproportionately low. Please encourage and pray for more vocations.

Our convocation. As you read today's Flame, you will hear much about the great success of our recent convocation. In our 38-year history, we have never had so many of us present. Indeed it can be said that never before in the history of the Catholic Church have this many deacons from one diocese

been gathered together in one place. The tremendous spirit generated over this event has made an indelible mark on my memory. I ended the convocation by giving a Pauline-style charge to carry on what we just experienced: a spirit of oneness we achieved in our very diverse community.

Two areas where this can be applied are the Catholics Come Home initiative and addressing the issue of violence. Now that the television messages inviting Catholics to return to their faith have ended, it is important to carry out the follow-up program with enthusiasm and generosity. If you are not directly involved in your parish's program, find

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Reflexiones del Vicario



Felicidades!

Tuvimos cuatro diáconos que se ordenaron el 14 de febrero. Estamos orgullosos de darles la

bienvenida a la Comunidad Diaconal, a ellos, sus esposas y sus hijos!. Encontrarán sus fotos y una pequeña biografía de ellos en otra página.

Esta es una buena oportunidad de recordarles que todos tenemos que hacer un esfuerzo de promover mas vocaciones al sacerdocio y al diaconado. Estas son vocaciones muy diferentes, pero complementarias. Últimamente nuestro número de diáconos está aumentando un poquito; pero el número de diáconos activos está decreciendo por el número de diáconos que cambian a "Senior

Deacon", o diáconos que se están retirando. En particular tenemos que tratar de que más hombres de color se hagan diáconos. En el futuro una gran parte de la Iglesia serán latinos, afro-americanos y asiáticos. El número de latinos, asiáticos y negros que se están preparando para ser diáconos, es desproporcionadamente pequeño. Por favor recen para que hayan más vocaciones.

Nuestra Convocación. Al leer hoy *The Flame*, encontrarán muchos detalles del gran éxito que tuvo nuestra Convocación. En los 38 años de la historia del Diaconado nunca habíamos tenido la asistencia de un grupo tan numeroso. Realmente podemos decir que nunca antes en la historia de la Iglesia Católica tuvimos tantos diáconos de una solo diócesis reunidos en un solo lugar. El tremendo

espíritu que generó este evento ha hecho una profunda marca en mi memoria. Acabé la Convocación con un desafío al estilo de San Pablo para que todos lleven consigo el espíritu de unidad que conseguimos en nuestra comunidad tan diversa. Podemos aprovechar esto en dos áreas: en *Católicos Volviendo a Casa* y cuando tratamos el hecho de violencia. Ahora que los mensajes de televisión invitando a los católicos a regresar a su fe han terminado, es importante seguir con el siguiente programa con entusiasmo y generosidad. Si no estás directamente envuelto en el programa de tu parroquia, pregunta a alguien que lo esté que es lo que puedes hacer para ayudar con este programa. Una manera de ayudar con esto es leyendo *Redescubriendo el Catolicismo*, un libro de Matthew Kelly. Les hemos dado una copia

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Retreat focuses on respect life issues

By Chick O'Leary

Six deacons and their wives joined with parish Respect Life Coordinators and concerned parishioners in early December for



Fr. James Heyd, the Cardinal's delegate for pro-life ministry, delivers a talk during December's Retreat for Life for Deacons and parish Pro-life ministers.

what Fr. James Heyd, Cardinal Francis George's delegate for Pro-life Ministry, hoped would serve as just the first retreat devoted to the spirituality of those who are active in the pro-life movement.

Katrina Zeno, co-founder of Women of the Third Millennium and national recognized speaker on Theology of the Body, was the featured presenter on Friday

evening. Fr Heyd, relying in significant part on Carl Anderson's book "A Civilization of Love: What Every Catholic can do to Transform the World," gave a series of presentations on Saturday that provided an analysis of the background of the pro-life movement and issued a challenge for an effort to bring about a change in the culture that fails to respect life.

"I think this was a historical moment," Fr. Heyd said. "First of all, we prayed and sought the Lord's guidance and we learned quite a bit, whether it was Katrina's powerful Theology of the Body presentation, or what I tried to do with educating folks on the historical and theological dimensions of building a culture of life."

Fr. Heyd, who brings a 20-year background in pro-life ministry both in the archdiocese and around the world especially during his tenure with Priests for Life, expressed his desire to work closely with the Diaconate community and considers this retreat a start in those efforts.

"Deacons are on the front line of life and justice issues in the church," Fr. Heyd said. "As such, they are extremely important to my work."



New deacons: Four candidates were ordained permanent deacons Feb. 14 at St. Rita of Cascia Church. The new deacons are, from left, Ramón Jiménez (wife, Rosa), Our Lady of Guadalupe; David Andrade (wife, María) St. Rita of Cascia; Ramiro Serna (wife, Guadalupe), St. Clare of Montefalco; and Felix Patiño (wife, Lorena), St. Clare of Montefalco.

Stauros

U. S. A.

Cherishing life in the midst of suffering

'Damien' benefits charities

Wayne Messmer brings Saint Damien to life in the award-winning one-man show "Damien" by Aldyth Morris. The next show will be at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, at the Chapel Theater, at the corner of Pine and Lincoln in Winnetka.

The popular production tells the story of the Belgium-born priest who ministered to the lepers of the Hawaiian island of Molokai, before dying of leprosy in 1889 at the age of 49.

Two charities benefit from performances of "Damien": the Glycogen Storage Disease Program at the University of Florida, at the Messmers' request on behalf of their granddaughter; and Stauros U.S.A., a locally based, national nonprofit organization committed to helping people find meaning, hope and peace in the midst of suffering.

Tickets are \$20. For more information, call (888) 736-7552 or visit

www.damienplay.org.

Stritch Retreat House update

By Richard F. Hudzik

One of the many benefits of living and working at the Stritch Retreat House is that I am blessed to greet so many of you as you pass through our doors. You teach me and our staff so much with the witness of your holiness. Thank you!

Another benefit which accrues is the opportunity to meet many of Chicago's (and Joliet's) priests. In this Year for Priests, many of the retreats and reflections focus on what a gift it is to be a priest. To help in this yearlong reflection, we have been giving the priest-retreatants a complimentary copy of a pamphlet called "Our Journey into Joy," by Msgr. Stephen Rossetti. As the priests reflect, they invite us to do so as well.

Msgr. Rossetti offers the following 10 aspirations for a holy priestly life:

1. Cease any serious sin.
2. Renew the sacrament of Penance in ourselves and in those we serve.
3. Pray more.
4. Dive deeply into the Eucharist.
5. Nourish good friendships.
6. Love the Church; love your bishop.
7. Practice gratitude.
8. Embrace your crosses.
9. Relax and trust.

10. Abandon yourself to God.

With certain changes necessary due to our stations in life as deacons and wives of deacons, these 10 aspirations are apt for all of us. Cardinal Stritch Retreat House would like to play a role in helping you realize these aspirations.

By the time the next issue of The Flame reaches you, the retreats listed below will remain for this fiscal year. Of course, private retreats are always an option.

April 16-18 Wives and widows.

Barbara Flynn will be leading the retreat. She is a spiritual director, wife, mother and grandmother who brings her insight to the women's retreat with "Kitchen Table Wisdom." She is co-author of a book "Midwives of An Unnamed Future," and co-founder of Wellstreams, a center for feminine spirituality.

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

June 4-6 Deacons and wives. This retreat with Friar Bernard Kennedy, OFM, is presently full. A waiting list has been formed.

Stop by to say "hello" or to stop for a prayer in the chapel, whenever you are in the neighborhood. We will be waiting to welcome you. Come away to pray.

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

2011 cruise for deacons

It's hard to think about next winter, especially after the long, cold winter we've suffered through this season, but the idea of warm Caribbean vacation in January makes it a little easier.

A seven-night Caribbean cruise is being organized with the Chicago Diaconate community and Celebrity Cruises Jan. 23-30, 2011. The trip is being billed as Saints of the Caribbean and is described as a travel study seminar.

During the days at sea, there will be gatherings for liturgy and study. Sister Laurie Brink, O.P., Ph.D., assistant professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union, will lecture on the topics of the "Communion of Saints," "Saints of the Caribbean" and "Call and Cost of Discipleship." The cruise provides an opportunity for continuing education credits.

Deacons and their families will be given priority, but others are also welcome to join the cruise.

The cruise will leave Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and will include stops at San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; and Philipsburg, St. Maarten. A special allotment of cabins has been reserved for the Diaconate.

Cabin prices range from \$799 for an inside cabin to \$1,799 for a sky suite. For more information, contact Deacon Dennis Colgan at (708) 366-8900 or travel agent Matthew Tadla at (815) 577-7655.

Ecumenical events

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

-- 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 Sperus Institute of Jewish Studies, 610 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago.

-- 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

Diaconate Council Notes January 9, 2010

Reports: Deacon Bill Stearns said a planned Chicago Mens' Conference is set for March 20 as a part of the Catholics Come Home project, to be held at the Rosemont Horizon. There is an emphasis on father/son participation with special reduced rates.

-- Deacons Dan Welter and Dennis Colgan gave an update on the Convocation. Current registration is 331 deacons and 234 wives, total registrants 565.

Welter is to speak to Dr. Sam Betances the keynote speaker to give him an assessment of the community and its concerns. The following considerations and challenges were proposed.

- Better preaching -- context, capability and assignments by partner.
- Ministry to the poor and unemployed.
- Pastoral changes.
- Reaching out to younger generation.
- Bereavement
- Diversity and Cultural Unity
- Keeping the community together
- Personnel board and listing of openings
- Pastor/deacon relationship
- Stress and overwork
- Pursuing Diaconal vocations
- Maintaining a balance of service
- Lost Generation Catechesis
- Diaconal apathy
- Support of Women Religious
- Support for widows, widowers and shut-ins
- Flexibility and accommodation
- Social services

- Appropriate exchange of information and report
- Violence and crime in the community
- Abortion, respect for life, divorce

This will give the keynote speaker a general idea of the concerns and challenges to the community.

Deacon Dave Egan proposed considering continuing programs for Post-Convocation and follow-up.

Egan reiterated the division between priests (especially pastors) and deacons as groups and the need to seek more common goals from a more unified and integrated clergy.

An issue arose as to perceived fewer opportunities for deacons to preach, especially in Vicariate III. This is an archdiocesan issue, especially since it also includes extern priests, resulting in an overall discouragement of the deacons.

This could be a limited (not general gripe session) discussion with the cardinal at the Convocation. A suggestion was made that the Executive Committee consider an ad hoc committee to speak with the affected deacons and prepare a report.

-- Vicar's Report: Presented by Colgan, it acknowledges the prospective participation at the convocation. Father Ahlstrom met with Cardinal George and deacons from the Black community to discuss the topic

of community and domestic violence. The deacons will be presenting it to the Presbyterial Council and the Office of Catholic Schools. There is a proposed Day of Reflection for all priests and deacons on Tuesday evening before Ash Wednesday.

-- Associates Report. Colgan reiterated the details on the Convocation. Roberta and Davis Fair are coordinators for hospitality.

-- Deacon Paul Spalla reported on three visits to new pastors and submission of a report of the last meeting of the Presbyterial Council.

-- Deacon Sal Lema reported on Hope is on the Way and its local work at Our Lady of Peace Parish

-- Report on formation and vocations. There are currently 62 men in formation

Year III 15	
Year II	14
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Aspirants	22

The formation newsletter is available on the Archdiocesan website.

-- Welter announced the need to consider nominations for officers of the council. Welter may be contacted for further nominations and slate nominations.

The next council meeting is scheduled for March 13.

Convocation revitalizes
Diaconate community

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keynote address by Dr. Samuel Betances.

Betances, a motivational speaker, consultant and sociology professor, challenged deacons to be effective homilists and ministers to an increasingly diverse Catholic Church.

The goal of his talk, Betances said, was to add "value to your leadership tool kit."

Just like Jesus posed the question of "who do you say that I am" to his disciples, Betances asked deacons to think about how others see them: "A mini-priest? A bridge or a go-between?"

Betances emphasized the need for deacons to embrace their role as bridge between the people and the bishop for whom they serve. "The only problem with being a bridge," Betances said, "was that people walk over you to get from one to the other."

Because of their diverse ministries and experiences in the workplace, the community and in families, deacons can bring a unique perspective to their preaching.

"Your homilies have to be different because your ministries are different (from priests)," Betances said. "Deacons are so involved in so many areas of the community, homilies must be different."

Effectively ministering to the changing, diverse face of the Catholic Church is a challenge, Betances said, but a necessity. He said deacons must be more culturally aware and try to bridge the gaps between ages and cultures, especially when they encounter resistance or racism.

Dialogue in a community is crucial, Betances noted, and he proposed community forums, which could be organized by deacons and



Dr. Sam Betances proved an effective keynote speaker for the Deacon Convocation.

wives joining together from surrounding parishes. These forums could provide opportunities to discuss and educate about issues ranging from single parenting to coping with Alzheimer's disease to utilizing the immigrant church to transitioning from a war zone.

The rest of the busy convocation included dialogue with Cardinal Francis George, OMI, workshops and an opportunity for deacons and wives to gather in their vicariates and meet with auxiliary bishops or their representatives.

The evening included a dinner and the annual ministerial awards.

On Sunday, Cardinal George

returned to celebrate a vibrant Mass with the Diaconate community. The convocation ended with a panel discussion and community dialogue with the Executive Committee of the Diaconate Community Council.

Deacon Dennis Colgan, associate director reported the collection at the Mass raised \$6,133.10. The amount was rounded up to \$6,200 and \$3,100 was donated each to Catholic Relief Service for Haiti and *Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos* orphanage.

Deacon Dan Welter, who served as co-chairman of the convocation, said he was very pleased with the turnout, but also how the convocation brought the Diaconate community together and provided an opportunity for people to talk and socialize.

"What a way to lift your heart," Welter said. "The speakers were good and the cardinal was right on with what he said."

Welter said there are plans to hold the overnight convocation every other year.

"Hopefully, everyone can leave here and go back to their ministries refreshed and restored."



The Deacons of the Archdiocese of Chicago and their wives took over the InterContinental Hotel in Rosemont for their first overnight convocation for deacons.

photos by Deacon Dan Dietsch

Cardinal dialogues with deacons

(Continued from page 1)

systematic feedback as of yet on how effective CCH has been. He noted that it is still early.

The cardinal said the program has given Catholics who already come to church "a better sense of themselves" and has also helped "the internal life of parishes."

In regards to the peace initiative, the cardinal and Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate community, recently met with African-American and Hispanic deacons to talk about the problem of violence in homes, schools and neighborhoods.

The cardinal said he wants to continue to explore how deacons can play a part in defusing the cycle and attitude of violence that permeate many neighborhoods, schools, television and the media.

"It's a question of what you can bring to the issue of violence," Cardinal George said.

As part of his dialogue with the Diaconate community, the cardinal fielded an assortment of questions, which convocation participants had submitted earlier in the day.

In regards to tensions between deacons and pastors, the cardinal suggested that prayer, especially praying the Divine Office together, might help strained relationships. He reiterated that problems that cannot be resolved should be brought to the attention of the vicar.

He said he also would consider a suggestion that deacons and priests have a dialogue on issues perhaps as part of the annual presbyterate convocation in the summer.

On deacons "running parishes" because of a shortage of pastors, Cardinal George said such a scenario really hasn't happened yet in the archdiocese. He noted it's not really part of diaconal ministry, and even if a deacon was full-time in the

parish, he would still have to report to a pastor who perhaps would oversee two or three parishes.

"It would require that people have the proper training and preparation for such a role," the cardinal said.

One question pertained to the training of foreign priests. The cardinal said priests from other countries are taught about American culture and language, but acknowledged there is no formal instruction regarding the role of permanent deacons in parishes. It is another matter the cardinal said he would take into consideration.

With the upcoming revised Roman Missal, the cardinal said "if you can read the Gettysburg Address and understand what Abraham Lincoln meant, you won't have any problem knowing what's going on."

The cardinal went on to describe the differences between the dynamic translation that has been used in the past and the more formal translation that is coming in the near future. The cardinal described it as "a far richer kind of experience" and noted that deacons will be relied upon to help people adapt when the translation is finally introduced at Mass, perhaps next year.

In closing, the cardinal encouraged the work of deacons.

"I'm very proud of the deacons. Everywhere I go, I speak with pride about our deacons. You are a marvelous group of people," the cardinal said. "I encourage you to pray. Keep in touch. We want to know when things are working and when they're not. And watch out for the poor - the materially poor and the spiritually poor."

In Memoriam

Deacon William Barker

A member of the first Diaconate class in the Chicago Archdiocese, Deacon William Barker, '72, died Jan. 18.

Deacon Barker, 81, is survived by Phyllis, his wife of 60 years, nine children, 24 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He ministered at St. Michael's in Orland Park and Sacred Heart in Palos Hills where he served for more than 30 years. At Sacred Heart, he was very involved with the RCIA and Bible study. A CPA by profession, he had also worked as the parish's business manager for awhile.

Rita Burns, liturgy coordinator at Sacred Heart, said Deacon Barker was a convert to the Catholic Church.

"He had such a love for the faith and moved on to become a deacon," Burns said. "He was a beautiful guy and a wonderful family. He had a great love for the Church."

Deacon Lowell Taylor

Deacon Lowell Taylor, '92, died Nov. 21, 2009. He was 87.

Deacon Taylor served at Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg. He is survived by his wife Mary Ann and the father of Kimberly, Janice and the late Linda and Pamela. He leaves four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

According to Marilyn Krawczyk, a family friend, Deacon Taylor and Mary Ann agreed early on to minister together. They would visit the sick and worked with the PADS ministry. Krawczyk said Deacon Taylor would even bring vegetables from his garden to the food pantry. Even after "retiring" as a deacon, he would still visit nursing homes.

In the parish newsletter, Father George Kane, who is founding pastor and now serves as pastor emeritus, said: "Lowell believed in the saving presence of God, so lived his life as a response to that."

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deacons.archchicago.org

Views from the Vicar

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out what needs to be done to help the program. One way of helping this matter is "Rediscovering Catholicism," a book by Matthew Kelly. We have given a copy to every deacon who attended the convocation. We have a large number left over if anyone would like to use them as a way of helping your parish program. Call our office for more information.

Many people feel helpless in the face of the violence that affects both families and neighborhoods. I am pleased with the initiative of our black and Hispanic deacons to address this. They have met with Cardinal George and are developing an action plan. There is much that can be done beginning with hope and belief that we need not be victimized into inactivity over what is happening. We need to be engaged and willing to step up and get involved in being part of the solution. Please contact our office if you would like to have more information sent to you about the problem and some recommended solutions.

Lent is upon us. I hope you will be using this time of increased prayer, fasting and works of charity to both deepen your own spirituality and that of the people you serve. For starters, if you do not have a spiritual director, get one. We can send you a list of spiritual directors who are available. Have a holy Lent and a blessed Easter!

Fr. Michael Ahlstrom

Reflexiones del Vicario

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a todos los diáconos que asistieron a la convocación. Nos han sobrado muchos libros, así es que si alguien quisiera leerlo, es una buena manera de ayudar en el programa de tu parroquia. Llama a nuestra oficina para mayores informaciones.

Muchas personas se sienten sin saber que hacer al ver tanta violencia que afecta tanto a las familias como a los barrios. Me alegra mucho la iniciativa de nuestros diáconos hispanos y negros que quieren hacer algo por esto.. Ellos se han reunido con el Cardenal para desarrollar un plan de acción. Hay mucho que hacer, comenzando por la esperanza y la necesidad de que no debemos dejar que la inercia nos deje en la inactividad de hacer algo por lo que está sucediendo. Debemos de querer ser parte de la solución. Por favor contacta a nuestra oficina si quieres que te mandemos más información acerca del problema y nuestras recomendaciones para la solución de él.

Ya estamos llegando a la Cuaresma. Espero que usen este tiempo para aumentar sus oraciones, su ayuno y acciones caritativas y que ahondes tu propia espiritualidad y la de la gente a quienes sirves.. Para empezar, si no tienes un director espiritual, consíguete uno. Podemos mandarles una lista de directores que están disponibles. Les deseo que tengan una santa Cuaresma y una Pascua llena de bendiciones!

Padre Michael Ahlstrom

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have recently gone to the Lord: Deacon Leroy Lilly '72, Deacon Michael Sanzone '85, Deacon Lowell Taylor, '92; Deacon William Barker, '72; Irene Sibrie, wife of the late Deacon Roland Sibrie, '72; Edward Kiley, father of Deacon Michael Kiley, '97.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Deacon Pablo Perez, Alicia Rivera, Mel Both, John Lucas, Robert Devereux, Susan Winblad, Olyssa Sassetti, niece of Bob Sassetti, Janet Studer, wife of the late Deacon Marvin Studer, '85, Ed Ryan, Frank and Blanche DeVita, José Vazquez, Bienvenido Nieves, Maria Del Llano, Soledad Muñoz, Jim Deiters, Roberto Figueroa, Sabino Sanchez, Ken Jenney, Patricia Gniech, Angelo and Maria Cordoba, Ernestina Ponce, Edwin Martinez, 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 Becker, Cindy Hernandez-Kolski and Mary Gronkiewicz.

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



Office for Peace and Justice update

-- There was a Catholic Social Ministry Gathering Feb. 7-10 in Washington, D.C., with leaders from across the United States. The theme was be "Charity in Truth -- Seeking the Common Good" and echoes Pope Benedict XVI's recent encyclical "Caritas in Veritate."

The gathering sponsored by 19 national Catholic organizations brought together Catholic leaders to pray, learn, advocate and strategize our social mission and message. For more information go to www.catholicsocialministry.org.

— Operation Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program. For more information on how you can participate contact Adrienne Curry. To see the list of this year's grant recipients go to www.archchicago.org/PeaceandJustice.

— Make social and environmental justice part of your parishes Palm Sunday Celebration with Eco Palms.

Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was accented by the jubilant waving of palm branches and is re-enacted each Palm Sunday as our observance of Holy Week



begins. Unfortunately, for the communities where these palms are harvested, palm fronds do not always represent the same jubilation they do for us.

Harvesting palm products is an important source of supplemental income for many indigenous families and communities in Guatemala and Mexico. However, over-harvesting palms can threaten the livelihood of these communities as well as the forests where the palm plants thrive.

If you are interested in purchasing Eco-Palms send your name, congregation, email and phone number to ecopalms@umn.edu with final prices to confirm your order. If you ordered Eco-Palms last year, you will be contacted about reordering for 2010.

— CRS has launched a major aid operation to help victims of the Haiti earthquake. The CRS team in Haiti is in place to distribute emergency relief. CRS has committed an initial \$5 million in order to complete assessments and

provide food, water and essentials to all those affected.

Send all donations to support the CRS efforts in Haiti to: Catholic Relief Services, 3525 S. Lake Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60653-1402

— Catholic Relief Services' Archdiocesan Committee is looking for people to serve on the Office for Peace and Justice CRS Committee. The next committee meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. March 10 at the Cardinal Meyer Center.

— CRS is looking for adults who are passionate about fair trade and Catholic social teaching and want to help other Catholics live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.

Volunteers are needed to attend a three-day all-expense paid intensive training May 21-23 in Traverse City, Mich. Participants will receive commissioning as an ambassador. Deadline for applications is Feb. 15.

For more information about any of these programs, contact Adrienne Curry, program director CRS/ Justice Education at (312) 534-8397 or acurry@archchicago.org; or Carol Smith, program assistant, (312) 534-3890 or csmith@archchicago.org.

Outstanding ministry honored



Jim and Rose Ernst, Our Lady of Hope, Des Plaines were honored for shared ministry.
photos by Deacon Dan Dietsch

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For ministry in the field of evangelization, Valle was recognized for producing and performing on his own radio program dealing with a variety of Catholic issues, teaching and spiritual matters. The program is made possible with donations from listeners and Valle himself.

Valle is a consultant to the Charismatic Movement and gives deacon retreats. He also has started the Divine Mercy prayer group in his own parish and is expanding participation from surrounding parishes.

Other deacons nominated for the St. Philip Award included: Jose Alvarez, St. Aloysius, Chicago;



Barbara Manning, St. George, Tinley Park, received the St. Priscilla Award

George Madock, St. Joseph, Homewood; Dan Ragonese, St. Victor, Calumet City; Pedro Sedano, St. Francis Assisi, Chicago; Sal Villa, St. Bruno, Chicago; and Richard Willer, St. Thomas Villanova, Palatine.

Manning was recognized for her

work for the church and in support of her husband's ministry.

According to the nominating letter, "she is an extraordinary woman who loves and cares for her family, supports her husband's ministry and works enthusiastically serving Christ's Church with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit endowed upon her."

Other nominated women included Carol DeFiore, St. John the Evangelist, Streamwood; Jackie DeLarco, St. Celestine, Elmwood Park; and Betty Gildea, St. Elizabeth Seton, Orland Hills.

Patino and Frank Gildea were honored for their ministry to the treasures of the church - the suffering, the neglected, the poor and needy.



Frank Gildea, St. Elizabeth Seton, Orland Hills, received the St. Lawrence Award

Patino is very involved with the Hispanic community in his parish and cooks for more than 300 people at the local soup kitchen every week.

"I truly consider it an honor to be with this deacon at our parish where he is known as a man of God," wrote his pastor.

Gildea was honored for volunteering at a facility for the past 11 years serving patients and clients.

"He is the messenger of prayer and hope to those who have the honor of a spiritual contact from this treasured man ... this deacon is not one of those people who goes around saying, 'I did! I did!' He just does and does," stated the nominating letter.

Other men nominated for the St. Lawrence Award included: Jack O'Leary, St. Joseph Homewood; and John Perkowitz, St. John Brebeuf, Niles.

The Ernstes were affirmed for their shared ministry in a variety of areas.

"They touch the lives of those who work with liturgy, religious education and coordinate the parish



Deacon Jim and Pat Revord received the couples ministry award.

sacramental and RCIA programs. They have a special place in their hearts for the youth group that they work with."

Jim and Pat Revord were recognized as an "outstanding witness to Christian marriage." The Revords have helped run their parish Renew program and baptismal prep for many years. "They visit the sick and grieving and are always seen as a team. Recently, they have taken on the responsibility of mentoring the newly ordained," read the nomination letter.

Other nominated couples include Louis and Barbara Abboud, St. Patrick, Wadsworth; Ken and Jeanne Bill, St. Domitilla, Hillside; John and Donna Breit, St. Thomas Villanova, Palatine; Bob and Keith Bulger, St. Paul of the Cross, Park Ridge; Benjamin and Iris Diaz, St. Philomena, Chicago; Dan and Thelma Dietsch, St. Joseph, Homewood; Francisco and Rosito Ramos, St. Philomena, Chicago; Roberto and Ana Rivas, Immaculate Conception, Chicago; Bill and Ann Stearns, St. Damian, Oak Forest; and Mitch and Florence Szady, St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, Chicago.

February

27 "Damien" performance

March

10 15th Annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture

13 Diaconate Council meeting

28 Palm Sunday

April

1 Holy Thursday

2 Good Friday

3 Easter Vigil

4 Easter

16-18 Wives and widows retreat



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