



# THE FLAME

Volume 6 Number 4

[www.Deacons.ArchChicago.org](http://www.Deacons.ArchChicago.org)

August - September 2010

## Deacons reflect on 25 years of ministry

By Deacon Dave Brencic

Twenty-five years is a special milestone, whether it be in a marriage, years on the job or serving God in ministry.

The Diaconate Class of 1985 is celebrating 25 years of ordination and will be recognized at the special St. Lawrence Festival of Ordination Aug. 8.

The Class of 1985 includes: Bob Antiss, Morris Bohannon, Bruce Bradford, Terry Childers, Bob Cnota, Dennis Colgan, Gene Damian, Gary Munda, John Nolan, Bob Ryan, Tony Salamone, Richard Stojak, Bob Sessetti and Joe Winblad.

Three deacons from this class reflected on what 25 years in ministry have meant to them:

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## A call to action against violence

By Deacon LeRoy T. Gill Jr.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, homicide is the No. 1 cause of death for African Americans and the second leading cause of death among Hispanics between the ages of 10 and 24. This country has one of the highest rates of interpersonal violence of any industrialized country, and violence is the major cause of nonfatal injuries among youths.

These facts should disturb our souls and cause us to act in bold unprecedented ways.

The problem of violence involving youth is devastating and complex. Individual and social influences contribute to an individual's susceptibility to use violence. Our media images often glorify interpersonal violence -- image after image reflecting the violence in society and in some cases may exploit or contribute to it. Our children are exposed to images of violent acts daily and we passively promote violence by not acting.

It affects us all -- even youths who are not direct victims of violence are victims to the chronic presence of violence via the media, in their homes and in some neighborhoods, it is a part of daily life.

In light of the above facts and the increase in violence facing our communities here in Chicago, we are compelled to face this issue head-on, seek solutions, and take action to reverse the trend. Just as we have a responsibility for saving a child in the womb, we too have the responsibility to respect and protect



Deacon Richard Rybski of Hope's on the Way was one of the many volunteers who spent part of two weekends in July working at St. Francis De Paula Family Interim House on Chicago's South Side. Deacons, lay people and men in the Diaconate Formation Program painted hallways, stairwells and worked on residents' apartments.

life from birth through "natural" death.

Since November 2009, the Black Catholic Deacons, in collaboration with a few of our Hispanic Catholic Deacons, several priests and youth advocates have collected best practices, ideas and recommendations from other church communities that have effective violence prevention initiatives up and working.

Our goal is to provide a menu/ toolkit with solutions for addressing the issue of violence. Topics that have been addressed through these meetings include unemployment and job skills training; the power of restorative justice and the blending of the borders to help create safe places in the community; the positive impact of parenting programs; the need for after-school programs; the need to have motivated principals, teachers and

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## The joke's on us

I think most of us would agree that God really has a sense of humor. And when we see that humor displayed, all we can do is shake our heads and smile.

For a recent homily, I found a story about a minister who was counseling a young man who was conflicted about decisions in his life. The minister suggested that the young man look at the wake he was making in life. Our actions and commitments tell the tale of who we are more so than our words. Like a boat making a wake that spreads through the water, we too make ripples in the lives of others we come in contact with.

In the homily, I raised the question of what kind of wake we are making as disciples of Christ?

So where does God's sense of humor fit in? I wrote the homily two weeks before I was supposed to give it, not realizing that during the afternoon after Mass I had agreed to go kayaking on the Chicago River with a group of Venture Scouts and adults from St. Barbara Church.

As we were walking to the kayak rental office, one mom commented how appropriate my homily was for the trip.

Soon enough we found ourselves battling a stiff breeze and wakes created by passing water taxis and tour boats. As I struggled to steer

the kayak through the waves, my homily kept echoing in my head and I appreciated God's little joke.

Reflecting on the day later that night, I actually followed my own advice and spent time looking at the wakes I have created in my role as husband, father, son, friend and deacon. There is one thing I realized in all of this. When I try steering the ship of my life, I usually end up going off course. When Jesus is at the helm, it's a lot smoother sailing.

Keep the fire burning,

Deacon Dave Brencic, editor

**PS: Pass your copy of *The Flame* on to your wife**

## 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 Sept. 15, 2010**  
 Email:

[DeaconNews@ArchChicago.org](mailto:DeaconNews@ArchChicago.org)

*The Flame* is also viewable online at

[www.deacons.archchicago.org](http://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.

## La broma es para nosotros

Pienso que la mayoría de nosotros está de acuerdo en que Dios tiene realmente un sentido de humor. Y cuando nos damos cuenta de ello, todo lo que podemos hacer es mover la cabeza y sonreír.

Para una homilía reciente, encontré la historia de un ministro que estaba aconsejando a un joven, que tenía un conflicto acerca de las decisiones de su vida.. El ministro le sugería al joven que se fijara en las ondas que estaba haciendo en su vida. Nuestras acciones y compromisos cuentan como somos, mejor que nuestras palabras. Como un bote que hace ondas que se esparcen por el agua, nosotros también hacemos ondas en las vidas de otros que tienen contacto con nosotros.

En la homilía, yo pregunté que clase de ondas estamos haciendo como discípulos de Cristo?

Bueno, y que tiene esto que ver con el sentido de humor de Dios? Escribí la homilía dos semanas antes de que me tocara hacerla, sin darme cuenta que en la tarde,

después de la misa, yo me había comprometido a ir a navegar en kayak en el río Chicago, con un grupo de Scouts y algunos adultos de la iglesia de Santa Bárbara.

Al caminar a la oficina para alquilar los kayacs, una mamá comentó en cuan apropiada fue mi homilía para antes del viaje.

Pronto nos encontramos todos batallando con una fuerte brisa y las ondas que se hacían al pasar los taxis acuáticos y los botes de turismo. Mientras yo peleaba por dirigir mi kayak a través de las ondas de agua, mi homilía seguía haciendo eco en mi mente y aprecié la pequeña broma de Dios.

Por la noche, al reflexionar en lo que pasó en el día, yo seguí mi propio consejo y pasé un tiempo pensando en las ondas que yo creaba en mi rol como esposo, padre, hijo, amigo y diácono. Hay algo que saqué en conclusión de todo esto. Cuando yo trato de dirigir el bote de mi vida, usualmente acabo saliéndome del curso. Cuando Jesús está al timón, la navegación es mucho más tranquila.

Mantengan el fuego encendido,

Diácono Dave Brencic, editor

## Views from the Vicar

Are you happy and proud of the relationship you have with your pastor? I ask this because I am aware that too many in our Diaconate community would not be able to answer yes to this question. A source of sadness and concern for me as the vicar for the Diaconate community is the number of times I become aware that relationships have fallen into bad times, and in some cases, was never very good. I want to offer some thoughts as to what deacons and wives might do to improve things.

We need to begin with realistic expectations. On rare occasions, a pastor and deacon or wife may go beyond a "pastor-deacon-wife of deacon" relationship and become a true friendship with a very close bond. This bond will last well beyond the period when they are assigned together. While these rare

relationships are a blessing, it is not realistic to expect that this will happen. While we can hope for a friendly and fraternal bond, this is not the same thing as a close or intimate relationship. We must be careful not to set our expectations too high.

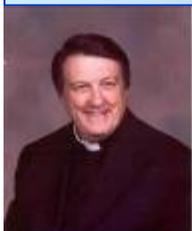
I would like to offer three virtues that can help create a good relationship between a pastor, deacon and the wife of a deacon. The first virtue is knowledge. Get to know your pastor. Establish a healthy rapport. Why not invite him to your house to have a simple supper with your family? Ask him some questions to show you are interested in getting to know him as an individual. Get him to tell you part of his own story. What are his dreams? Is he more of an extrovert who likes to talk or more of a listener? Does he learn about things by clearly seeing or hearing someone explain or is he more of an intuitive? Is he more of a

logical thinker or more of a feeler in how he makes decisions? Does he like things decided and ordered or is he more laid back? These may not be questions you ask him directly, but could be things you ask yourself as you get to better know your pastor.

The second virtue I would like to emphasize is good communication. Above all this means good listening skills. The root meaning of obedience is to listen. God gave us two ears and only one mouth. Most of us should do twice as much listening as we do talking. Good listening is when we can repeat back to the other person's satisfaction what they have just said to us. "Let me make sure I am hearing you correctly... I hear you say...." While there are some of us who need to learn to better zip our lip, others need to learn to assert themselves by speaking up when something upsets them instead of ignoring their concern. Of course

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## Reflexiones del Vicario



¿Estás feliz y orgulloso de la relación que tienes con tu pastor? Pregunto esto porque me he dado cuenta de que muchas personas de

nuestra comunidad diaconal no serán capaces de contestar "sí" a esta pregunta. Una manera de preocupación y tristeza para mí, como vicario de la comunidad diaconal, es el número de veces que me he dado cuenta de que las relaciones han cambiado para mal y que en algunos casos nunca fueron buenas. Quiero ofrecerles algunas ideas de como los diáconos y sus esposas pueden mejorar esto.

Tenemos que comenzar con expectativas realísticas. En raras ocasiones las relaciones del pastor con el diácono y su esposa van más allá de una relación de trabajo y se convierten en verdaderas y sinceras amistades. Esta relación perdurará inclusive cuando dejen de servir en

la misma parroquia. Mientras estas relaciones son una bendición, no hay que esperar que esto pase siempre. Mientras que esperamos que exista una relación amigable y fraternal, esto no es lo mismo que una relación cercana o íntima. Tenemos que tener cuidado de no poner nuestras expectativas muy altas.

Quiero ofrecer tres virtudes que pueden ayudar a crear una buena relación entre el pastor y el diácono y su esposa. La primera virtud es **conocimiento**. Conoce a tu pastor y establece una buena relación entre ustedes. ¿Por qué no invitarlo a tu casa a cenar con tu familia? Hazle preguntas para mostrarle que estás interesado en conocerlo como individuo. Haz que te cuente parte de su propia historia. ¿Cuáles son sus sueños? ¿Es el una persona extrovertida que le gusta conversar o le gusta más escuchar? ¿Entiende más las cosas cuando las ve y escucha o es intuitivo? ¿Es más un pensador lógico o es más un sentimental al hacer sus decisiones? ¿Le gusta más decidir y ordenar o es

más tranquilo? Estas son preguntas que talvez no debes hacerlas directamente, más bien son cosas que debes preguntarte a ti mismo para poder conocer mejor a tu pastor.

La segunda virtud en la que quiero enfatizar es, **buena comunicación**. Sobre todo esto significa saber escuchar. Dios nos dio dos oídos y una sola boca. La mayoría de nosotros debería a aprender a escuchar dos veces más que a hablar. Escuchar bien es cuando podemos repetir satisfactoriamente a la otra persona, lo que esta nos dijo. "Asegurémonos bien que lo he escuchado correctamente... Lo he escuchado decir..." Mientras que algunos de nosotros debemos aprender a mantenernos callados, otros tienen que aprender a expresar cuando algo les molesta, en vez de ignorarlo y guardárselo para ellos. Claro, es básico saber que hay momentos para comunicarse. Me preocupa cuando me entero que el diácono y el pastor pasan meses y a veces hasta

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## Meet our new DDCs

By Deacon Dave Brencic

Four Deanery Deacon Coordinators (DDCs) were recently appointed by Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar for Chicago's Diaconate Community.

The new DDCs include Tom Bartholomew, Greg Bartos, Ray Loman and Rich Voytas. Bartholomew and Bartos are both for Deanery V-E, Loman for I-C and Voytas for V-B (W).

The DDC is responsible for the support and development of diaconal ministry within his deanery. He visits with new pastors to explain the role of the deacon and is expected to contact each deacon in the deanery at least twice a year.

The DDC works with the Episcopal vicar, the Vicariate Deacon Coordinator and the vicar.

DDCs also serve as members of the Diaconate Council.

The term of the appointment is for three years, with the vicar approving subsequent, two-year terms.

"The Diaconate Community is blessed with many members who are both talented and generous. Our Deanery Deacon Coordinators are among the best of these. We need to be grateful for their enthusiastic service," Father Mike said.

Tom Bartholomew, ordained in 1994, is a member of St. Michael Church in Orland Park. He has been involved with Scripture study, spiritual director for retreats, RCIA and adult education.

As a DDC, Bartholomew said he sees his role as "a voice of the deacons/wives in the deanery."

Greg Bartos, ordained in 2006, ministers at St. George Parish in Tinley Park. He has been involved with the Ministers of Care, the Ministers of Prayer and Praise, marriage prep and retreats, along with the usual liturgical duties.

"It sounded like a new challenge and I thought it was time to give back to the diaconate community for

all it has given me," Bartos said. "I hope I can increase the level of communication amongst the deacons in my deanery. In the business world, 'networking' is always *the* buzzword. Well, we deacons could also be leveraging our talents and abilities by applying this 'networking' concept to the various ministries in which we serve."

Ray Loman, ordained in 2006, ministers at St. Patrick Parish in Lake Forest. Loman has been involved with a variety of ministries including minister of care, RCIA, adult chaperone for a youth ministry service trip, teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade religious education, chairman of the St. Patrick Lenten Mission team, and as a member of the Admissions and Scrutinies Board for the Deacon Formation Program.

He said he accepted the position of DDC to assist the Diaconate Council.

"The Permanent Diaconate staff and Executive Council have made great progress in organizing and improving the Permanent Diaconate. I accepted the position of DDC to assist in this activity," Loman said.

After attending his first council meeting, he said he was "very impressed with the thought and effort that went into preparing for the meeting. It is clear that the council members are hardworking and dedicated."

Rich Voytas, ordained in 2006, serves at St. Daniel the Prophet Parish in Chicago. Voytas has been involved with marriage prep, baptismal prep and the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

In his position as DDC, Voytas said he wants to keep the deacons in his area informed and up to date. "My goal would be to be a voice for the deacons in my area," Voytas said.

He also wants to be of help to those deacons who may be struggling in their parishes or ministries.

"I feel that some of our deacons out there are really hurting and need someone to be there for them and to be a voice for them. I hope I will be able to accomplish that during my time as the DDC," Voytas said.



## Saints of the Caribbean Cruise

Join the Diaconate community for a travel study seminar on the Saints of the Caribbean during a seven-night cruise through the southern Caribbean Jan. 23-30.

The cruise is being organized by the Chicago Diaconate community and Celebrity Cruises.

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 community.

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 (800) 614-2628 or email: mtadla@cruisone.com.

## A call to action against violence

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staff; greater community awareness and involvement; basic human services; gun control; funding, etc. All of the programs and strategies discussed aim to prevent youth violence and related risk factors.

We are asking everyone to share in the responsibility to address and reverse this trend of violence. Violence is a learned behavior that is not uncontrollable or inevitable. It is within our power to change.

Every faith-based community (Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, Jewish) could offer after-school or out-of-school programs in their community at least one day a week. If we want our youths to stay off the streets, we must provide a place for them to go. Youths need a safe place to gather after school that provides extracurricular activities, tutoring, mentoring, workshops, cooking classes and various other activities that are engaging. There could be collaboration with neighborhood organizations to establish and provide activities. If every church, mosque, synagogue, and temple, in every community, provides a program one day a week, our youth

would have a safe place to gather every day. That is why our institutions of faith exist -- to ensure that the people of God are served.

Schools have a unique opportunity to engage families and are a practical venue for violence-prevention initiatives that teach conflict resolution and interpersonal development and decision-making skills and techniques. Our Catholic schools are the institutions committed to creating and strengthening healthy morals encouraging the skills for living out nonviolent solutions to social conflict.

Parents are to understand that our youth are more likely to behave violently if they witness violence at home. Our youths have learned attitudes accepting aggressive behavior as normal and as an appropriate way to solve their problems. The more they are exposed to violence in their homes, in the media and in their neighborhoods, the greater their risk for aggressive, violent acts.

We are asking parents to learn how to resolve their differences nonviolently. This includes nonviolent language. We are the example children will follow. We are asking parents to become proactive - seek to improve communication

skills and relationship-building techniques. Limit the amount and types of media programming children are viewing. Decide what your household can do as a family to improve your neighborhood.

We are asking the entire Church community to seek out and participate in the various events and initiatives to reduce the trend toward violence.

Social and economic imbalances are rooted in the systemic causes of violence. Hatred of another economic class, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, continues to incite crimes of hate. Our politics reflects and delivers speech that feeds the anger of opposing political parties. Fears of those we do not know and understand appear as threats to our security within our countries boundaries and beyond.

We are engaged in a war on terror outside our borders. But we also face another great war on our own homeland -- the war against youth violence.

We are calling ALL to Action -- Our Silence is Killing.

-- Deacon LeRoy T. Gill Jr. is co-chairman of Black Catholic Deacons of Chicago

## In Memoriam

### Deacon Robert Crandall

Deacon Robert Crandall, '79, died in June two weeks after Betty, his wife of 62 years, passed away.

Deacon Crandall, 86, was one of the founding members of Our Lady of Ransom Parish in Niles where he ministered for 31 years. During his years of service, Deacon Crandall started the night ministry at Holy Family Hospital where deacons would be on duty at the hospital during the weekends. He also started the parish bereavement program, was active in RCIA, baptismal prep and performed many services

at nursing homes and cemeteries.

In his work life, Deacon Crandall worked for the phone company writing procedural manuals. He also served in the Navy during World War II.

Deacon Charlie O'Donnell, who worked with Deacon Crandall, described him as "a great guy. He really lived and believed in his faith. That 'believe what you read, teach what you believe, practice what you teach,' he lived to perfection."

Deacon Crandall is survived by two children and two grandchildren.

### Deacon Robert Monica

Deacon Robert Monica, '93, died

in July. He was 77. Deacon Monica served at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Chicago for more than 16 years.

Deacon Monica was very active in the Knights of Columbus, served as grand knight at St. Ambrose and held several state-level positions. Before he retired, he worked as a building maintenance manager.

In his ministry at St. Thomas the Apostle, Deacon Monica visited the sick and served as an usher.

Bill Hall, who served with Deacon Monica in the Knights of Columbus, said "he preached Scripture with a passion" and was "a very charitable person. If he had it, he would give it to you. He was that kind of person."



## Phoebe's Corner

### A checkup for women in ministry

By Helene Albano

Over the past 16 years, I've given a lot of thought to our role as women ministering within today's church. While we do not share the call to ordination, many of us have received formation in pastoral ministry and all of us are called to live out our baptismal commitments. In addition, our husband's ordination has unavoidably directed a certain amount of attention to our marriage and family life.

It is my opinion that these factors present us with a rich opportunity to share the "bread" of our sacrament and our personal gifts. I feel that God has entrusted us with a sacred call to nurture our families and parish communities with the love and blessings that have enriched our lives. While I am well aware that our gifts and talents are wonderfully diverse, I am convinced that each of us has a vital role to fill in today's Church. I offer the following questions as a brief "checkup" as we renew our commitment to God through loving service.

#### Loving God in our families

1. Do I take regular time to nurture myself through prayer, spiritual direction and sacramental participation?
2. Do my husband and I pray together regularly and make family devotional time a priority?
3. Do we encourage and support our family members as they face the struggles of life:
  - ... By building homes where love and respect are freely given and experienced.
  - ... By fostering good communication.
  - ... By affirming positive moral

choices.

- ... By living with integrity, virtue and charity toward others.
  - ... By humbly and honestly admitting our shortcomings and our need for God's patience, mercy and forgiveness.
  - ... By asking for our family's forgiveness when necessary.
  - ... By expressing unconditional love and forgiveness in the midst of family difficulties and disappointments.
4. Does our family make serving others a priority? At home? At the parish? Do we spend time serving others as a shared family activity?
  5. Do my husband and I make time to nurture and support our sacrament of marriage through regular times for:
    - Open, honest communication
    - Relaxing and enjoying each other's company?
  6. Do my husband and I set reasonable limits on ministry commitments in order to maintain the integrity of our marriage and family life?

#### Loving God in our parish/ community

1. Have I discerned my gifts and talents? Do I regularly take time

to develop them?

2. Do I use my gifts to share God's love with others...
  - In the parish?
  - In my workplace?
3. In my ministries, do I empower others by:
  - Identifying, affirming and utilizing their unique gifts?
  - Providing opportunities for spiritual growth?
  - Fostering collaboration?
  - Incorporating shared prayer into every gathering?
  - Sharing the responsibility for developing prayer experiences?
4. Do I pray for my ministry?
  - For those I hope to reach with God's love
  - For my partners in ministry
  - For God's help and direction when making ministerial decisions
5. Do I entrust my efforts into God's loving and providential care?
  - Do I pray for God's help when facing obstacles?
  - Do I accept the responsibility for working through difficult circumstances with faith, hope, courage and charity?
  - Am I willing to embrace the daily challenge of growing in holiness?

### Women on retreat

By Chris Grable

Why is it important for women of the Diaconate to be on retreat with other women? If you were unable to attend the "Kitchen Table Wisdom" retreat with Barbara Flynn this year, perhaps the following quotes from the women who attended will inspire you to mark your calendar for the March 25-27, 2011, and April 20-22, 2012, retreats.

There is "wisdom and faith in the women" that brings about "trust, acceptance and invitation." The retreat is a time to "reconnect" and "give a gift to oneself" and meet

"new friends." It's great to "be around women of faith" to share "life and laughter," to witness "hopefulness and miracle," to be "touched by stories" and feel secure that you are in a "sacred and safe place."

In Isaiah 18-19, the Lord says that we are to let go and that He will do a new thing. Just as in the kneading and rising of dough, we are always being transformed and made into something new. The women's retreat is your "time away to think about God," to "focus," to "let go of things," to "experience coming home to family" and to "be filled up" with "renewed hope that the church is in good hands."

## Crossing over

By Deacon Tom Bartholemew

About this time last year, my wife and I were preparing to receive a guest in our home for the month of September. This was not just any guest, but a deacon from the Diocese of Hanover in Germany. He was a participant in the Crossing Over program that had for the past five years taken priests and lay ministers from German dioceses and brought them here to Chicago and embedded them in parishes throughout the archdiocese.

The purpose of this experience was to get these ministers to pick up on not only some of the pastoral expertise here, but also to absorb some of the energy that Karl Albrecht had seen when he visited parishes here in the United States.

Karl Albrecht is primarily known as the principal owner of KAI International, which operates some Aldi stores as well as being connected with Trader Joe's. Being a practicing Catholic, Albrecht felt that the Catholic Church in Germany needed a boost and he liked what he saw during his business trips to the U.S.

After getting an organization developed in Germany at the University of Bochum, the program worked with Loyola University and the Archdiocese of Chicago in setting up a process that would take these ministers from Germany and place them in situations that would be conducive with the goals of the Crossing Over program.

Ingo Langner was the first deacon chosen to be a part of the program. He lived with us for the month of September, but involved himself in as many activities as the parish of St. Michael could avail. As a result, we had many long conversations comparing our diaconal experiences. One of the first differences between Germany and the U.S. is that unlike the volunteer model used in the U.S., all of the deacons are paid through a subsidy from the federal

government.

In Germany, the government collects a tax and then distributes that income to the various religious denominations. This gives the German church *per se* an economic advantage in that they are not solely dependent upon contributions for their budgets.

The Diaconate, which had its first restoration in Germany after Vatican II, became a career choice for many who felt attracted to this vocation. The requirements to be a deacon seem somewhat more academically rigorous for many reasons including the fact that as a deacon one will be a paid employee of the church.

One of the most intense periods during Diaconate formation, is the progress made by the individual deacon to qualify for employment upon ordination. Similar to the U.S. experience, some tension existed between the priests and the deacons. One of the ways it manifested itself was in the rare times a deacon would be liturgically present on the altar.

Evidently, this is a very strong feeling because no matter how many times an invitation was extended for Ingo to assist at Eucharist, he declined. Ingo did however observe the deacon's role at baptisms, funerals and interments. He also saw and heard us preach on the one Sunday of the month that the deacons were scheduled.

Overall, he was very positive about his experience here in Chicago. He had some criticisms as well and they seem to be well founded. His presence to us became a gift because we learned to expand our understanding of the Diaconate. The differences as well as the similarities often ended up being humorous, thus becoming a real litmus test for their validity. We continue to e-mail each other and keep up with our diaconal experience.

Though 15 years younger, Ingo is married with two children and must deal with the challenges involved with being a parent, spouse and

cleric. He seems to have found a good balance and apart from becoming a friend has become a good resource. His wife is a theologian and teaches in a nearby university. His degrees would be comparable to a Master in Divinity here in the U.S.

He works as a licensed social worker for the Church in a parish as well as being a part of a multi-parish ministry team. He is happy as a deacon, but understands that by church standards the restored Diaconate is in its infant stage. There is still much to come in creating a clear identity that is both credible as well as practical.

One of the more difficult challenges is to have the congregations understand the role of the deacon. But then, that would ultimately depend on the deacon doing likewise. That seemed to have a recognizable ring to it. The challenges of being a deacon seem to cross cultural boundaries.

## New USCCB resources on marriage

The USCCB has recently released a catechetical and educational aid on sexual difference and complementarity. The resource titled, "Made for Each Other," includes a 12-minute DVD and an accompanying resource booklet.

"Made for Each Other" is the first in a series of materials available through the initiative of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage entitled "Unique for a Reason."

This resource addresses two areas essential for a proper understanding of the true meaning of marriage: sexual difference and the complementarity between man and woman.

This DVD and resource booklet will assist priests, deacons, catechists and others in reflecting and handing on the truth about marriage. These and other resources are available at

[www.marriageuniqueforareason.org](http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org)

## Lessons from the Early Church

Noted author and patristics scholar, **Mike Aquilina**, Executive Vice President and Trustee of The St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology will headline a two-day seminar on the teachings of the Fathers of the Church at St. Lambert Parish, Skokie, October 22-23, 2010.

With changes to be taking place in the liturgy, it is an opportune time to step back and examine what the early Christians have to say that is of relevance to the contemporary Church. How is our understanding of liturgy shaped by what Jesus' followers in the first centuries believed and practiced? Have the changes in the eucharist brought us closer to the ancient church or separated us from our roots?

These are some of the questions that will be addressed over the course of the two days as Mike Aquilina, fellow authors Rod Bennett and Carl Sommer, together with Rev. Richard Simon examine the faith, and particularly the liturgy, from the vantage point of the Fathers of the Church. Each of these presenters has been successful in making the thoughts and writings of the Fathers of the Church accessible to the ordinary believer.

The seminar will be held on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22-23, at St. Lambert Parish, 8148 N. Karlov, in Skokie. Participants may choose to attend either or both days. The program will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Cost is \$15 for one day or \$20 for both, and an optional box lunch may be ordered in advance.

For more information or to register, contact St. Lambert Parish at (847) 673-5090, or Deacon Chick O'Leary at (773) 775-6659.

## Reflexiones del Vicario

*(Continued from page 3)*

años, sin sentarse a conversar. Si no tienes un tiempo regular para hablar con tu pastor, ya sea individualmente o con otros, estás sufriendo de una comunicación rota y esto no es nada saludable.

La última virtud que quiero mencionar es, **confianza**. Si no hay confianza mutua entre el pastor y el diácono y su esposa, nunca habrá una relación saludable y los fieles sufrirán por esta falta de confianza. Ningún pastor es perfecto, pero debemos tener confianza en que nuestro pastor está haciendo lo mejor para ser un buen pastor para su gente. Habrán oportunidades en las que nos sentiremos traicionados por confiar. Esto también sucede en el matrimonio. Pero lo que mueve al matrimonio más allá de la desilusión sobre la violación de la confianza, es cuando hacemos la decisión de seguir amando y confiando. Cuando nos damos cuenta que otros siguen confiando en nosotros, aprendemos a portarnos de una manera digna de confianza. Esto vale también para nuestra relación con nuestro pastor. Claro está que habrá situaciones cuando a pesar de estar tratando lo mejor para practicar estas virtudes y las otras que no tengo espacio para enumerar, todo parece fallar. Entonces es cuando debemos buscar ayuda. No decidan murmurar acerca de las debilidades de su pastor. En vez de esto pide la intervención de alguien como yo, para que intervenga y ver si una tercera persona puede mejorar las cosas. Les ofrezco estas reflexiones por que sé que hay muchos de ustedes que están sufriendo muchos problemas por la pobre relación que tienen con su pastor. Si las cosas andan bien entre tú y tu pastor, di una oración de gracias y reza por tus hermanos y hermanas que están sufriendo. Que el amor y la sabiduría de Dios los guíe siempre!

*Padre Michael Ahlstrom*

## Views from the Vicar

*(Continued from page 3)*

what is most basic is that there are scheduled times for communication. It disturbs me when I hear of a deacon and pastor who can go many months, and sometimes years, without sitting down to talk to each other. If you do not have regular times to meet with the pastor, either individually or with others, you are suffering from a lack of communication. This is never anything but unhealthy.

The final virtue I want to mention is trust. If there is not a mutual trust between pastor and deacon and wife there will never be a healthy relationship. Parishioners will suffer from this lack of trust. No pastor is perfect, but we must have confidence that our pastor is doing his best to be a good shepherd for his people. There are times when we may well feel betrayed for trusting. This also happens in marriage. But what moves a marriage beyond disillusionment over the violation of trust is when we make a decision to go on trusting and loving. When we know the other is still trusting us, we learn to behave in a trustworthy way. The same is true of our relationships with our pastors.

Of course there will be those situations when doing your best to practice these virtues, and those that I do not have the space to write about, all seem to fail. That is when we need to seek help. Do not resort to the temptation to backbite or gossip about your pastor's weakness. Instead get someone else, such as myself, to intervene and see if this can be improved with a third party to help put things in a better place.

I offer these reflections because I am aware there are many who are suffering from great distress over a poor relationship with their pastor. If things are good between you and your pastor say a prayer of thanks and pray for your brothers and sisters who may be hurting. May God's love and wisdom guide us always!

*Father Michael Ahlstrom*

**Diaconate Council Notes July 10, 2010****-- Installation of officers:**

Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate, led a ceremony of installation. The newly elected executive committee members are: Bill Stearns, chairman; George Kashmar, vice chairman; Sal Lema, secretary; and Chuck McFarland, treasurer. The new DDCs installed are Ray Loman, Vicariate I Deanery C; Rich Voytas, Vicariate V, Deanery A & B West; and Thomas Bartholomew and Gregory Bartos, both representing Vicariate V Deanery E.

**-- Treasurer's Report: Charles McFarland**

As of April 30, 2010, the bank balance was \$34,916. Since then credits to the account of \$627.85 and disbursements of \$173.92 leave a current balance as of June 30, 2010 of \$35,369.93.

McFarland said \$3,500 had come in for disbursement to the charities for deacons. A motion was made to match up to \$1,000 and a check be sent to each charity represented on our Lenten request. The motion carried.

Chairman Stearns authorized treasurer McFarland to take over the responsibility of the money market account. He is to see that this transfer from American Funds to the Archdiocese Bank is completed.

**-- Policy and Procedures Manual, Chairman Stearns**

The manual is being streamlined and there will be a meeting on it Aug. 10 with the hope of having it completed by the end of the year. The manual will be available online. Anyone wishing a copy will be charged a fee to defray costs.

**-- Report on Communication Plan by Vice-Chair, George Kashmar**

DDCs are being asked to communicate more with the deacons by calling them and using their personal e-mail addresses whenever possible.

**-- 2010 St. Lawrence Day Report, Chairman, Tom Coffey**

St. Lawrence Day planning is well under way. Volunteers are needed and asked to contact Tom Coffey. The annual event is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 8, at St. Barbara Parish in Brookfield with Mass at 2 p.m. to honor the silver anniversary deacons and the

newly ordained deacons.

Past chairman Dave Egan reminded the council of the decision to rotate the site to each vicariate. Next year's St. Lawrence Day will be hosted by Vicariate V. The co-chair this year is Larry Chyba who will be the chair of next year's event. His co-chair will be from Vicariate VI, the host for the 2012 St. Lawrence Day. In this way, the event chairs will have knowledge of how to run it. Rotating the site will allow those in more distant locations the opportunity to attend more easily.

**-- Request for Two Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Representatives**

Egan explained the position of APC. Essentially you become a member of the Cardinals Advisory Board. They meet quarterly and work within committees at the cardinal's request. Two members are being sought. Anyone interested is to contact the executive board.

**-- Vicar's Report, Fr. Mike Ahlstrom**

Each council member received information regarding DDCs' pastoral visits, ministry evaluation and forms, conducting visits with new pastors and administrators, and a form on the current approved stole fees. The DDCs were instructed to make personal visits with the new pastors or administrators in their areas during the months of July or August. Additionally, Fr. Mike requested an e-mail or phone call follow-up on how the visits went.

Fr. Mike also mentioned that VDCs and DDCs should be planning at least four events a year within their vicariates.

St. Stephen Symposium will be held at Concordia College this year. The presentations will be conducted exclusively by deacons.

The Personnel Board is actively meeting. Fr. Mike stated that there is resistance to deacons transferring to a different parish. He asks that deacons be open to this request.

At the Cardinal's request, Fr. Mike, Dan Welter and Carol Walters of the Archdiocesan Office of Training are in communication about a presentation to be given to all international priests becoming pastors or assistants within the diocese, concerning deacons within

the diocese and their roles.

**-- Assistant Director Report, Dennis Colgan**

The ID making equipment has been ordered. Dennis is asking for one volunteer from each vicariate to learn how to operate the equipment.

The St. Stephen Symposium this year will be held at Concordia College. The cost of \$15 per person includes both breakfast and lunch.

The office is looking for a chair for the St. Stephen Symposium. Anyone willing to volunteer is to contact the Diaconate Office.

The Diaconate Office conducts two luncheons for the widows of the Diaconate. Colgan asked that the council provide for the costs of these luncheons.

**-- Reports from VDCs and DDCs**

A member of each vicariate gave an updated report on ongoing communication and events.

Vic. I: John Lucas has met with Bishop Rassis regarding the vicariate deacon meeting. They also discussed parishes that might need a deacon.

Vic. II Paul Spalla gave a copy of his report that was sent to each member.

Vic. V Joe Truesdale will be meeting with his new DDCs Sept. 1.

Vic. VI, Dan Ragonese has received letters from the five new pastors in his vicariate asking for deacons.

**-- Other reports and comments**

Diaconate Formation Program Report: 47 applications were received and 11 to 17 men will go forward. Currently, there are 18 men in candidacy.

Ordination will be Sunday, May 15, at Holy Name Cathedral.

A question was asked about a recent letter that was sent out concerning a major revision of the formation program. The one major change was the exclusion of wives in the academic program. After considerable discussion, two decisions were made. The chairman will ask Deacon Bob Puhala, program director, to attend the Sept. 11 council meeting to address concerns. Fr. Mike will learn more about the changes and consider damage control.

-- Next meeting will be Saturday, Sept. 11, at 9:15 a.m. at the Diaconate Office.

## Stritch Retreat House update

By Deacon Richard F. Hudzik

We occasionally speak of “searching for God.” However, this phraseology might simply be our self-indulgent way of saying that we have not been paying attention.

It is not that God needs to be discovered. It is rather that we need to open the eyes and ears of our souls to see and listen. Perhaps, however, there are seasons when we cannot see or hear clearly enough, no matter how hard we try. Perhaps, God does seem hidden, despite our yearning and listening. Even then, however, there is mystery.

In Karl Rahner’s “Encounters with Silence,” he prays: “Your love has hidden itself in silence, so that my love can reveal itself in faith. You have left me, so that I can discover you. If you were with me, then, in my search for You, I should always discover only myself. But I must go out of myself, if I am to find You – and find You there, where You can be Yourself.”

Retreats at Stritch, whether preached, private, silent or directed, all involve quiet and silence – at least for a time. In those moments, we discover how full absence can be. For the sake of the people you love, for your own sake, for the worship of God, come to Stritch for time away to pray.

Listed below is our current lineup of retreats for the Diaconate community. It is our aim to get a mailing out to you in August with more details. In the meantime, please call to reserve your place.

- ... Sept. 10-12: Deacons and wives (Fr. Michael Ahlstrom)
- ... Sept. 17-19: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)
- ... Oct. 8-10: Deacons (Friar Bernard Kennedy, OFM)
- ... Oct. 29-31: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)
- ... Nov. 19-21: Deacons and wives (Fr. James Kubicki, SJ)

- ... Jan. 14-16: Deacons and wives (Fr. Kevin Scalf, C.P.P.S.)
- ... Feb. 11-13: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)
- ... Feb. 18-20: Deacons (retreat leader invitation pending)
- ... March 25-27: Deacon wives and widows
- ... April 1-3: Deacons and wives (Dr. Kate Wiskus, D.Min.)
- ... May 20-22: Deacons and wives (Spanish language)

As always, if you find the need to get away for a few days of quiet for other than the scheduled retreats, let us know. We want to welcome you here for prayer.

“And what if the Lord is not only at the end of the road: what if he walks with me, if he is at the very heart of my poverty, if eternity is inscribed in time?”

Then silence speaks, solitude reveals itself as full of a presence.

Beyond every seeking, every feeling, every reasoning, God sovereignly affirms himself as God: ‘I am with you, deeper within you than your own self.’”

(from “Poor, Therefore Rich,” a collection of Carthusian novice conferences)

Come away by yourself  
*Venite seorsum.*

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

## Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have recently gone to the Lord: Deacon Robert Crandall, '79, and his wife Betty Crandall, Cirila Rodriguez, wife of Deacon Emiliano Rodriguez, '74, and Deacon Robert Monica '93.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Antonio Navarro, Carol Ciston, wife of Bill Ciston, '91, Maria Patiño, John Wilkenson, Ida Bohannon, Robert DeFiore, Robert Sassetti, Linda O'Donnell, Alicia Rivera, Mel Both, John Lucas, Robert Devereux, Susan Winblad, Janet Studer, wife of the late Deacon Marvin Studer, '85, Ed Ryan, Frank and Blanche DeVita, Maria Del Llano, Soledad Muñoz, Jim Deiters, Sabino Sanchez, Patricia Gniech, Angelo and Maria Cordoba, Ernestina Ponce, Edwin Martinez, Teresa Ochoa, Donald Palmer, Agnes Barrett, John Burt, José Uroza, Wilmer Rodriguez, Santos Soto, Jose Marrero, Iris Diaz, John Simmons, Ronald Wiener, William Malloy, Cheryl Becker and Mary Gronkiewicz.

Please contact the Diaconate Office at (708) 366-8900 when someone in our community has died or is ill.

## Recommended Reading

FRANCIS CARDINAL  
GEORGE, O.M.I.

The  
Difference  
God Makes



A CATHOLIC VISION OF  
FAITH, COMMUNION,  
AND CULTURE

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The Chicago Deacons Web site:  
[deacons.archchicago.org](http://deacons.archchicago.org)

## Deacons reflect on 25 years of ministry

(Continued from page 1)

### Bruce Bradford

Bruce Bradford served at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Oak Park for 22 years before retiring to Pekin, Ill., where he was assigned to Sacred Heart in Peoria. Since September, he also helps out at parishes at two nearby towns.

Bradford, 67, worked in the travel business for 25 years with Pan Am Airlines. He and his wife, Theresa, have four children. When he was at St. Catherine's, he was involved with marriage preparation, home visits and working with the mentally challenged.

He notes that "retirement has been everything but that." Much of his work has been with an organization called PARC, which deals with the mentally and physically challenged. Bradford is involved with a Bible Connection ministry, where he goes out every week and breaks open Scripture and helps people relate to it on their level. He also has been involved with Cursillo and continues his involvement with marriage prep and visiting shut-ins in some high-rises in Pekin.

The biggest highlights for him during the past 25 years have been witnessing the weddings of his sons and daughters and baptizing all 10 of his grandchildren.

Bradford said his best advice to others is to "be true to yourself and understand that it's OK to say 'no.' It is something that (Father) Ed Salmon was very clear about."

### Gary Munda

Gary Munda's 25 years of ministry have been marked by transition. Munda served at Holy Family Church in North Chicago for six years before it was closed and consolidated with Queen of Peace. He served there for

12 years until it was merged with Immaculate Conception.

During the past year, a new parish has been formed called Most Blessed Trinity, which consists of the three sites.

During these consolidations, Munda acknowledges there have been "a lot of challenges" in trying to make the people feel more comfortable.

Munda, 72, is now retired but worked as a chemical analyst at Abbott Laboratories. He and his wife, Betty, have five children.

Munda said the 25 years of ministry have been about balancing family and ministry.

He has been involved in wide variety of ministries including a food sharing program, prison ministry, and he served on the Diaconate Council for a number of years. Over the years, the Mundas have traveled extensively with Father Salmon to Ireland, Mexico and Italy and have enjoyed experiencing other cultures.

"I've done things that I would have never done if I wasn't a deacon," Munda said. "The positives far outweigh the negatives."

There are many highlights for Munda including going to Rome with a group from Chicago that accompanied Cardinal Francis George before he was officially made a cardinal. During the trip, the group had a private audience with the pope.

He also has enjoyed working at the grassroots level with the food sharing and prison ministry programs, along with receiving a degree in pastoral studies, "which is something I really didn't expect to happen."

He noted one of the most important highlights for him is having his children finally adapt to and accept his ministry.

Munda said it's important that

deacons learn "to hang in there" when they face challenges or difficulties because "things have a way of working out." He also stressed: "Keep asking yourself who you are. Keep asking yourself why you are a deacon."

### Tony Salamone

During the 25 years since ordination, Tony Salamone has lived outside of Chicago for 20 years. When he and his wife, Roberta, lived here, they spent time all over the Chicago area. The couple has four children.

Salamone, 67, now retired, had worked as a system programmer. The Salamones currently reside in Mena, Ark., a town of 5,600 people.

During his 25 years of ministry, Salamone was involved with marriage prep, annulments, home visits, feeding migratory workers in Arizona, teen ministry and "just about anything the pastor asked me to do."

Salamone said dealing with annulments and serving the tribunal and his current ministry with teenagers have been the real highlights for him.

He admits that working with youth and teenagers was "something I never thought I would be doing."

"We forget about kids. We concentrate on the younger kids with CCD and once they get to high school we think they can make it. But we have to keep after the youth or we will lose them. There are so many temptations out there. They will walk away from the Church real easily," Salamone said.

His advice to his brother deacons is simple: don't overdo it. "Be patient with your pastor, but don't be afraid to say no," Salamone said. "Sometimes we go in thinking that our pastor knows everything and he doesn't. Don't take on more you than you can handle. You can overload yourself real quickly."

## Important dates

Mark your calendars for these important dates:

**Oct. 3:** St. Francis Day celebration will be at 4 p.m. at Elmcrest Banquets in Elmwood Park.

**Oct. 23:** St. Stephen Symposium will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Concordia University in River Forest.

**March 12, 2011:** Diaconate Community Convocation will be from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Concordia University. Focus will be the new translation of the Roman Missal.

**March 25-27 and April 20-22, 2011:** Women's retreats. (see page 6 for information)

**PS: Please share your copy of *The Flame* with your wife**

**Access *The Flame* online at [deacons.archchicago.org](http://deacons.archchicago.org)**

## Crisis line available

The Upper Room offers unique services such as skilled listening, para-professional counseling, information and referral, suicide prevention and crisis intervention for priests, religious and deacons.

The Upper Room will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is staffed by trained volunteers. All calls are confidential and anonymous.

The phone number is (888) 808-8724.

Services offered include:

- ... Compassionate listening
- ... Networking with agencies to serve the person in need
- ... Saving lives through crisis-intervention
- ... Being a supportive friend to the elderly
- ... Follow-up services when needed or appropriate
- ... Reassurance calls
- ... Counseling for depression, alcohol, drugs, employees, family, financial, job/employment, housing, medical, relationships, spiritual discernment or suicide.



Noted author and scholar, Mike Aquilina will headline a seminar on the Fathers of the Church and the Liturgy of the Early Christians on October 22-23. Information on page 8.

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