



THE FLAME

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October-November 2011

Sunrise services shine spotlight on violence

By Deacon Dave Brencic

On a picture-perfect late-summer morning, people of faith gathered along Chicago's lakefront to pray that a new day of peace would dawn.

The second annual Back to School Sunrise Services were organized by the Black Catholic Deacons of Chicago with the focus of "praying for nonviolence in our hearts, family, schools and streets."

Services were held at five different beaches Saturday, Aug. 27, and this year each site had a particular focus. Rainbow Beach stressed gang violence; 63rd Street Beach focused on bullying; street violence was the theme at Oakwood Beach; 31st Street had a Spanish



Fr. Larry Dowling preaches at the Mass held during the sunrise prayer service at 12th Street beach.

Mass focusing on domestic violence; and 12th Street Beach highlighted racism.

Deacon Leroy Gill, who organized the services, said at least two deacons were assigned to each beach along with one or two priests. Masses were said at some of the beaches, while others held prayer services.

Other deacons helping out included Deacon Leonard Richardson, Deacon Alfred Coleman, Deacon Roscoe Dixon, Deacon William McKinnis, Deacon Wallace Harris, Deacon Pablo Perez, Deacon Ramon Navarro, Deacon Dexter Watson and Deacon William Pouncy.

This year's services appeared to draw smaller crowds. Last year, 75 to 100 people participated at each site. Gill said he was happy with the services this year, but couldn't explain why fewer people came.

(Continued on page 6)

ODW offers sessions on new missal

The Office for Divine Worship is currently sponsoring two-hour sessions of information and reflection on the English translation of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal for any interested Catholic. These evenings/afternoons are being held throughout the archdiocese until early November.

The workshops will explore how the Third Edition of the Roman Missal developed and how it follows the principles of Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from the Second Vatican Council.

Participants will examine the Order of the Mass and pray the new texts. There will be an opportunity to reflect on the texts and sing some of the dialogues and acclamations that will be used once the new missal begins Nov. 27.

Participants will be invited to consider how they can go beyond the technical changes in the texts to praying the liturgy with reverence, attention and enthusiasm and using these new texts as the foundation for living the liturgy.

Here is a schedule of dates, times and places for the workshops:

Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica, Chicago, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 5

... St. Linus, Oak Lawn, 7 to 9 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 12

... St. Mary of the Angels, Chicago,

(Continued on page 7)

In This Issue:

From the Editor	2
Views from the Vicar	3
Phoebe's Corner	4
Truck stop ministry book	4
Formation update	5
Why Pray?	5
Stritch Retreat House	7
Vicariate II meeting	7
Deacon council notes	8
Community News & Obits	9
Deacon Facebook group	9
St Lawrence Day celebration ..	10
Convocation help needed	12
Mass of remembrance	12

Hectic pace returns

It is amazing how with the flip of a page of the calendar, life can change. As soon as September debuted, parish meetings and functions started up. The easy schedule of summer with its warm evenings of relaxing, going for walks, catching a ballgame on TV and reading, is now just a pleasant memory.

Weeknights and weekends from September to May certainly have a much different pace and feel. Despite it all, I have to remind myself to take the time for that quiet walk after dinner or the bike ride through the forest preserve on a Sunday afternoon, just to recharge the batteries, get away from the hectic pace and let God touch my heart.

The black deacons should be commended for organizing the sunrise services to pray for peace and speak out against violence. Every night of the week, the TV newscasts are filled with tragic stories of senseless killings of people throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. It seems like no community is immune.

As deacons, we need to be leaders in our parishes and communities and be instruments of peace. It's also important that we especially support our brothers and sisters who are on the front lines of the battlefield. While a handful of deacons attended the various sunrise services, there should be many more coming out to support this effort. I found it to be a moving, uplifting start to a peace-filled Saturday morning.

I've asked various people recently how the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have changed us as a nation and a people. Were your churches any more crowded that weekend when we marked the 10-year anniversary? It seemed like we had a few more people here and there, but nothing like how the church was filled the Sunday after the attacks. It's a sad commentary on our society, that people have seemed to have forgotten what we felt as a nation 10 years ago ... how people turned to God for comfort, how we made a real effort to help one another and those random acts of kindness seemed to have no end. What will it take to recapture that?

Keep the fire burning,

Deacon Dave Brencic, Editor

The Flame

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Regresa nuestro paso agitado

Es increíble como al doblar la página del calendario, la vida cambia. Apenas comienza septiembre, y ya comienzan las reuniones y actos de la parroquia. El horario fácil de verano con sus noches templadas de relajación, ir de paseo, ver un partido de pelota en la televisión, tener tiempo para leer, es ya un lindo recuerdo.

Las noches de entre semana y los fines de semana de septiembre a mayo ciertamente se sienten muy diferentes. A pesar de todo, tengo que recordarme de hacer un tiempo para una tranquila caminata después de cenar o de un paseo en bicicleta a través del bosque el domingo por la tarde, para recargar las baterías, alejarme de este paso tan agitado y dejar que Dios toque mi corazón.

Debemos dar merito a los diáconos Afro-americanos por organizar los servicios al amanecer para rezar por la paz y condenar la violencia. Cada noche los noticieros de la televisión están llenas de trágicas historias de matanzas sin razón por toda el área metropolitana de Chicago. Parece que ninguna comunidad es inmune a ello.

Como diáconos, debemos ser los

líderes en nuestras parroquias y comunidades y ser instrumentos de paz. Es realmente importante que apoyemos a nuestros hermanos y hermanas que están en el frente de batalla. Mientras que algunos diáconos asistieron a estos servicios al salir el sol, debería haber muchos más que apoyen este esfuerzo. Me pareció muy hermoso y emocionante el comenzar un sábado en la mañana lleno de paz.

He preguntado recientemente a varias personas como les afectó la vida los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre y como nos cambió como nación. ¿Estuvieron las iglesias más concurridas ese día en que se conmemoraba el décimo aniversario de los ataques? Pareciera que hubiéramos tenido más personas por aquí y por allá; pero nada comparado a como se llenaron las iglesias el domingo después del ataque. Es un triste comentario de nuestra sociedad, de que la gente parece haber olvidado lo que sentimos como nación hace 10 años... como la gente se volvió a Dios por consuelo, como hicimos realmente un gran esfuerzo por ayudarnos unos a otros y todos esos actos de bondad que parecían no acabar. ¿Qué tenemos que hacer para recapturar eso?

Mantengan el fuego encendido

Diácono Dave Brencic, Editor

Views from the Vicar

Senior means older. For many of us, aging is a difficult transition. I have come to see it as a time of blessing. But when I turned 50, I was invited to join AARP. Retirement was 20 years away and I was just getting used to being middle age. In my pride, I was insulted and did not join for quite a few years.

Now that I am in my 70th year of life, I am aware that I am starting to age.

While I do not enjoy the lessening of my agility, I have a joy and peace that has grown. Loving what I do as Cardinal George's vicar for all of you, and being of good health, I have opted not to become a senior priest next summer after I become a septuagenarian.

While I was ready to turn over the helm to someone else, after

discussing some options with Cardinal George, we decided to take a year at a time. Besides staying on another year, Cardinal George also approved of having a deacon as associate vicar to share the vicar's responsibilities. I thought my priest successor could then be less than full time. But the cardinal said instead of waiting for my successor, I should do this next year. And so I am excited that next summer I will be breaking in a deacon as associate vicar. Next spring a search committee will give Cardinal George a nomination.

I want to share a few brief thoughts on the spirituality of aging. Fathers Ronald Rolheiser and Richard Rohr have written a good deal on the spirituality of the second half of life, which for

many does not happen until around the age of 60. For men, usually something happens to their health, their career or their relationships

that is a crisis. Their former path of ascent and building up becomes a path of descent and subtraction. It is process of surrender and falling into God. Both values and vision are transformed.

For women, it is somewhat the opposite. A life of descent and caring for others becomes a path of ascent as they discover a new potential in their life. I often observe that wives of deacons, after they go through the formation required of them to support their husband's ordination, discover new interests and skills for ministering. They start on their path of ascent.

The story of Abram and Sarai beginning a whole new life in their senior years (Genesis 3) is a scriptural paradigm of this, as is the older Moses being asked to assume a new role and way of life (Exodus 3). Jesus has a conversation with Peter

(Continued on page 10)

Reflexiones del Vicario



Llegando a ser una persona mayor: Un tiempo para una Conversión Espiritual

Para muchos de nosotros el llegar a ser mayores es una transición difícil. Para mí es como un tiempo de bendiciones. Cuando cumplí los 50 años, recibí una invitación para pertenecer a AARP. Faltaban 20 años para la edad de retirarme y recién me estaba acostumbrando a ser una persona madura. Me sentí herido en mi orgullo y no me inscribí a esa asociación hasta muchos años después. Ahora que tengo 70 años, me estoy dando cuenta de que estoy comenzando a envejecer. Aunque no he perdido mi agilidad, ha crecido en mi la felicidad y la paz. Amando lo que hago por ustedes como Vicario del Cardenal George y teniendo buena salud, he decidido no ser un "Senior Priest" el próximo año. Mientras que ya estaba preparado para entregar el mando a alguien

más, después de discutir algunas opciones con el Cardenal George, decidimos posponer la decisión de año en año. Fuera de que me quedaré un año más, el Cardenal George aprobó el tener un diácono como vicario asociado para compartir las responsabilidades del vicario. Pensé que así el sacerdote que me reemplazará trabajará solo medio tiempo. Pero el Cardenal dijo que en vez de esperar a mi sucesor, debería hacerlo ya el próximo año. Así es que el próximo verano estaré entrenando a un diácono como vicario asociado. En primavera cada comité le dará al Cardenal George una nominación.

Quiero compartir algunos pensamientos de la espiritualidad de envejecer. Los Padres Ronald Rolheiser y Richard Rohr han escrito mucho acerca de la espiritualidad de la segunda mitad de la vida, que para algunos no llega hasta alrededor de los 60 años. Para los hombres, usualmente pasa una crisis en su salud, su carrera o su relación. Su camino ascendente y de construcción, se vuelve descendente y de disminución. Es

un proceso de rendirse y apoyarse en Dios. Los valores y la visión se transforman. Para las mujeres es más o menos lo opuesto. Una vida descendente y de cuidar a otros, se convierte en un camino ascendente al descubrir un nuevo potencial en su vida. A menudo observo que las esposas de los diáconos después de pasar por la formación requerida para apoyar la ordenación de sus esposos, descubren nuevos intereses y habilidades para su propio ministerio. Comienzan su camino ascendente. La historia de Abraham y Sara comenzando una nueva vida en sus años de vejez (Génesis 3) es un ejemplo de esto, en las escrituras, así como la historia de que a Moisés se le pidió que asumiera un nuevo rol y una nueva manera de vivir (Éxodo 3) Jesús tuvo una conversación con Pedro de lo que podía esperar cuando envejeciera (John 21:18). Las responsabilidades cambian, tienes más sabiduría y la energía y movilidad decrecen. Es un tiempo cuando o nos transformamos o nos convertimos en unos viejos amargados. Negarnos es nuestro

(Continued on page 11)



Phoebe's Corner

By Helene Albano

As we begin another school year, we praise God for his call uniting us in our struggle against violence in our hearts, our homes and on the streets of our city.

I would like to offer special thanks to our black deacon brothers who again coordinated the Aug. 27th Anti-Violence Sunrise Prayer Services on the Chicago beaches. My husband and I prayed at the Rainbow Beach site with our brothers and sisters from across the city. We gathered to intercede for God's help, guidance and protection for our children, as well as to offer hope and encouragement to those surrounded and affected by the violence in our city. I was inspired

by the prayers and faith witness of those gathered, as well as the support shown by civic leaders. A representative member of the Chicago Teachers Union joined us in solidarity on behalf of the children.

Educating ourselves for service is also a vital part of our call. As we serve the Church through the Diaconate community our reach should extend well beyond the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. It involves the responsibility to recognize and address the violence plaguing our homes and communities. On Sept. 24, the Women of the Diaconate invited Father Charles Dahm to address the topic of domestic violence and offered a chance to learn more about the violence that often continues unrecognized in our own parishes.

The challenge of confronting violence in our city begins in our

own hearts, with a call to listen, to love and to respond generously. We are called to embrace the gifts of faith and unity in the midst of our diversity. As leaders in the Catholic Church, we are called to continually strengthen our bonds of faith, fellowship and collaboration to address the challenges we face. Whether through prayer, education or action, may the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper continue to inspire us as we work for him:

“As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. I consecrate myself for their sakes now, that they may be consecrated in truth. I do not pray for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one as you Father, are one in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” *John 17: 18-21*

Book devoted to truck stop ministry

Truck Stop Ministry has been around for the last 15 years or so. The ministry was started at the request of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops. The bishops realized that there were more than 8 million truckers on the road every day with no way for them to get to church and no one to minister to them.

The Diaconate community was asked to become ministers to these people of the road.

Deacon Rich Seveska has been a truck stop minister for the last 12 years, most of the time at a truck stop northwest of Chicago.

Seveska was born in Illinois and was raised on a small farm near the Wisconsin border. He has been married to his wife Kathleen for 40 years and they now live near St Louis. He has been an ordained Catholic deacon for 24 years.

Seveska said he found the truck

stop ministry very rewarding as he listened to the faith and the life stories of the truckers who shared with him.

The experiences moved Seveska to write a book called “The Truck Stop” to let others share in the faith and the lives of these lonely people.

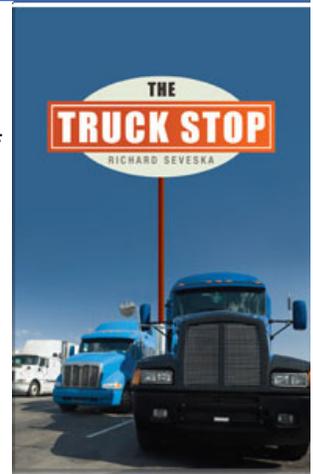
With more than 70 chapters, the book is a touching collection of stories that will instill inspiration, faith, courage and God's love. The stories cover a wide range of human subjects, but have a common thread of hope.

“The Truck Stop” tells stories that provide an insight into what it is like to be a truck driver with the simple pleasures and the gut-wrenching pains they face being on the road for weeks or months at a time. Truckers often have incredible family problems, higher-than-average divorce rates, discipline problems with their children, financial problems, as well as tough times with everyday home repairs and every other kind of difficulty imaginable.

Some of the book's stories are verbatim accounts of the actual events, like, “The Hills” and “The Voice in the Orchard.” Seveska also has included some

inspirational stories about how to approach people and get them to open up. There are chapters on the frustration of driving a truck for a living, “what is a truck stop” and on how to encourage the faith of others.

“The Truck Stop” is available online at www.truckstopstories.com and on Amazon.com as well as in local bookstores. The book sells for \$19.99 in paperback, \$29.99 for hardcover and \$9.99 for eBook.



A new friendship with the Lord

By Deacon Bob Puhala

I was speaking with parents from New York who were visiting my alma mater, Northwestern University, with their son during one of the school's prospective student/parent campus tours. They wanted to know more about Medill, the university's renowned journalism school from which I was awarded a master's degree in 1982. I told them of my experiences, the incredible talent of the professors who truly mentored students and the massive Medill alum network of contacts that gives graduates a decided advantage when looking for their first break into the uber-competitive media biz.

I also spoke of the new experience Northwestern was for me. Here I was, a sheet metal worker's son, a simple sodbuster from the University of Illinois, venturing into the realm of the Ivy League elite, an ambience that pervades the tony lakeshore campus. Yet an amazing thing happened: Rather than being shut out, a whole new world was opened to me. And I became friends with wonderful people from all over the country -- who continue to crank out great journalism to this day.

New experiences, new friendships. They were very real gifts to me. Then again, sacred Scripture tells us that newness is a great grace. So is friendship. But what has this to do with Diaconate? One writer notes that upon ordination, *a deacon receives a great grace -- that of a new friendship with the Lord*. If you believe that is true, like I do, then pray for the 15 new men who come to the 2011-12 Deacon Formation Program as aspirants, opening themselves up to the action/graces of the Holy Spirit in a new friendship with the Lord as they discern a life of ministry to God's



DEACON FORMATION

people.

Don't forget the 10 men in Year I who begin the distinct path of candidacy, which more fully emphasizes the four dimensions of formation. These are: human -- building on talents already gifted by God; intellectual -- growing in knowledge and articulation of our faith; spiritual -- embracing an enhanced relationship with God through sacrament and prayer; and pastoral -- learning the skills necessary for becoming competent and confident ministers of the Church.

Eighteen Year II candidates continue the formation journey, which includes the most integrative experience of their entire formation experience -- the Service to the Liturgy internship. The deacon community can assist these candidates by offering them opportunities to observe deacons in ministerial action. And nine men in Year III follow the path leading to the final steps of the formation journey. Pray that they will respond generously and selflessly, listening to God's will for them in service to His people. If that is, indeed, ordination, praise God!

Finally, pray for all the wives and families of the aspirants and candidates -- especially the wives whose sacrifices are so real -- that they may continue to cooperate with God's will, utilize the graces that both husband and wife receive through their sacramental marriage -- which only enhances formation, and continue to give witness to their love of Christ and His Church by their support of their husbands' formation and diaconal ministry.

Deacon Puhala is director of the Diaconate Formation Program for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Why pray?

By Deacon Bill Stearns

Saints are as old as the Catholic Church. And yet when we speak of saints we almost always consider the prayers of these saints. For nothing reflects more of who a saint is than their prayer.

It is not my intention to reflect upon saints, but rather to reflect and devote these articles to what make people saints. And simply put, people become saints through their prayer.

There are not just 100 or even a 150 great Catholic books about prayer. There are thousands and more being published all the time. They are your friends and companions on your journey of prayer. Treasure them, hold them close. They will tell you where you have come from and where you are going.

If you are looking for a collection of prayers it is always good to start with the Liturgy of the Hours. Should you not be using this prayer daily please recall that you as a deacon (or ordained clergy) are required to do so. However, we must also experience other prayer forms if we are to become saints.

Consider the new ground that was broken in the 16 documents (Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations) of Vatican II.

As deacons, we are a people acknowledged to be pilgrims on the road to eternal life rather than people who have already arrived. And as such we must acquire the experience of prayer in our daily lives.

Augustine, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, John Paul II and many, many more are all authors of great works of prayer. We read these people not in their time, but in ours, looking for something to keep us going in our journey toward God. Read these books in order to change and perhaps save your lives.

For that reason, I say "pray always."

Sunrise services shine spotlight on violence

(Continued from page 1)

At 31st Street Beach, new Auxiliary Bishop Alberto Rojas offered a Mass in Spanish. Monsignor Rich Hynes, who oversees the Department of Evangelization, Catechesis and Worship, also attended the services along with representatives from various archdiocesan offices such as Peace and Justice, Black Catholics, the Diaconate Office and Catholic schools.

At 12th Street Beach, Father Larry Dowling, pastor of St. Agatha, and Fr. Matt Eyerman, pastor of St. Columbanus, concelebrated Mass with Deacons Dexter Watson and William Pouncy assisting.

During the Mass, priests and deacons shared their thoughts and prayers regarding racism and violence.

As part of the opening prayer, Pouncy prayed for the perpetrators and the victims of violence.

“For others who do not have the



Lord in their hearts, who do not know the Lord, it is up to us to show them the way, show them that the force they have upon our young

children is not what God intended it to be,” Pouncy said. “Dr. King had a dream and that dream was that we could all live in a world free of racism and free of hate, free of killing one another and not giving our children a chance. ... let the dream of Dr. King also be our dream and what the Lord Jesus Christ intended and let Dr. King’s dream live on in our hearts.”

After doing a reading from the Book of Psalms, Deacon Greg Shumpert offered what he called “a prayer of protection” for those who had gathered for the service.

“My prayer for protection is that when we leave this place we go back to our communities and that peace, that love, starts with us reaching our hands out and encouraging someone else to step up with us and to reach out to young people

because the young people are in need the most ...,” Shumpert said. “Sometimes we think the world might not be able to be changed, but with our God all things are possible. That’s the prayer of protection that I brought to share with you this morning.”

In his homily, Dowling related the story of how years ago when Rainbow Beach was segregated a group of young blacks decided to take a stand to end the segregation

and went swimming at the beach. Later as they left the lakefront, the group was attacked and suffered all kinds of racial insults and physical injuries. But the attack only strengthened their resolve and the group decided to return to the beach week after week to confront the racism.



A gathering of about 35 people attended the sunrise services against violence at 12th Street Beach in Chicago. Deacon William Pouncy, below, offers a reflection on the theme of racism and violence.

“They made their commitment to wade into the water, to walk into a place where there was discrimination, to walk into a place where they knew they could be subject to violence, walk to a place they knew in their hearts would lead them to recognize that it was a place for all of God’s people. They decided to take a stand,” Dowling said.

Gill said he hopes the services would spur the Catholic Church and the Diaconate community to do more to end the cycle of violence.

“We Catholics fight against abortion, this is the thing. Respect life is that and more. I struggle with that just being the focus of respect life. All this murder is not just black or white,” Gill said. “I want the Church to get more serious and involved. I want to hear the Church hollering out about that.”

Stritch Retreat House update

By Deacon Richard F. Hudzik

The greatest joy of living and working at Stritch is the opportunity to meet and greet so many of you, pray with you and sometimes dine with you, as you come for your retreats. In a distant second place is the joy of being constantly on the lookout for the latest and best in retreat ideas, theologians, retreat leaders and writing. It is that second-place joy I would like to reflect on with you briefly.

I enthusiastically commend to you the work of Word on Fire Ministries and, in particular, their just-released 10-part DVD series entitled "Catholicism." Stritch has a copy now in its library and my wife and I are halfway through viewing the 10 episodes.

What we have seen thus far is not only visually stunning and musically enchanting, but the reflections of Father Bob Barron are inspiring and moving. For example, his reflection on First Corinthians' treatment of faith, hope and love ("and the greatest of these is love") acknowledges that, in the next life, only love will endure. Our faith will be complete, as we enjoy the beatific vision and our hope will have been satisfied – what we have hoped for will be ours. As God is love, heaven continues our awakening to whom and what love is.

Father Barron has brought the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" to life in an illustrated and musically inspired format. If the gold standard for multi-part documentaries on culture is Kenneth Clark's "Civilization," then Father Barron's "Catholicism" will be the criterion by which all subsequent popular explanations of the Catholic faith will be judged.

I commend this work to you, its companion study guide and the book "Catholicism." Also, I venture to ask you to include in your prayers the

people of Word on Fire – not just Father Barron, but also his colleague, Father Steve Grunow and the entire executive and administrative staff, some of whom it has been my pleasure to meet. They are a gifted, faith-filled lot and they deserve our encouragement and prayers.

I turn finally now to the usual fare of this column. By now, you will have received our mailing dated August, 2011 that contained the latest news from your retreat house. A thumbnail sketch of the retreat information from that letter is below.

If you have not yet reserved your space, do so now so as to assure yourself of the desired dates. Note that the list below does not include any privately arranged class retreats.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2 Deacons: Rev. James Kubicki, S.J. retreat leader

Oct. 7-9 Deacons and wives: Rev. Albert Haase, OFM retreat leader

Oct. 14-16 Deacons and wives (in Spanish): Rev. Bolivar G. Molina-Ramirez retreat leader

Nov. 18-20 Deacons and wives: Rev. James Donovan retreat leader

Feb. 17-19 Deacons and wives: Rev. Michael McGovern retreat leader

March 16-18 Deacons and wives (in Spanish): Rev. Claudio Diaz retreat leader

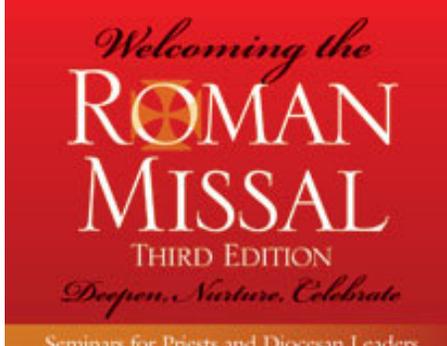
April 20-22 Deacons' wives and widows: Dr. Kate Wiskus retreat leader

April 27-29 Deacons: Deacons Chick O'Leary and Richard Hudzik, retreat leaders

May 4-6 Deacons and wives: The Sisters of the Apostles of the Interior Life retreat leaders

May 18-20 Deacons and wives (in Spanish): retreat leader pending

Deacon Hudzik is director of Cardinal Stritch Retreat House



ODW offers sessions on new missal

(Continued from page 1)

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16

... St. Francis De Sales, Lake Zurich, 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26

... St. Hubert, Hoffman Estates, 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27

... St. Eulalia, Maywood, 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 30

... St. Mary Star of the Sea, Chicago, 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 30

... St. William Parish, Chicago, 7 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 30

... St. Columba, Chicago, 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9

More information can be found on the ODW website (www.odw.org). Admission is free and participants can register online or by calling (312) 534-5153.

Vicariate II meeting

The Vicariate II annual meeting with Auxiliary Bishop Francis Kane will be held at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, in the parish hall of St. Mary of the Lake Church, 4200 N. Sheridan Road (entrance on Buena Avenue).

This is a potluck dinner so please bring your favorite dish. All deacons and wives please plan to attend this very important get-together with Bishop Kane.

Diaconate Council Notes September 10, 2011

Following members were present at the Diaconate Council meeting:

Executive members: William Stearns, chairman, George Kashmar, vice chairman, Sal Lema, secretary, Charles McFarland, treasurer, and Dave Egan, chair emeritus.

VDCs present: Paul Spalla, Giulio Camerini, Joseph Truesdale

DDCs present: Dan Welter, Ubaldo Munoz, Frank Beil, Juan Gonzalez, William Pouncy, Chris Virruso, John Guaghan, Richard Tryjefaczk, James Deiters and Thomas Bartholomew.

Other members: Peggy Virruso and Margaret Colgan representing the wives of the Diaconate Community.

Absent were: R. Loman J. Vazquez, D. Ragonese, J. Minor, D. Wagner, R. Hudzik S. Stecker, L. Rybicki; J. Lorbach, D. Robak, E. O'Leary, A. Lopez, R. Silva, J. Pineda, M. McLynn, I. Alvarez, G. Bartos, J. Cook, T. Knetl, and V. Haro.

With only 20 members in attendance, a quorum was not present. Also present were Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar, and Dave Kalina, representing the Diaconate Formation Program.

A motion was made by Dave Egan and seconded by Dan Welter that the meeting be conducted and ratified at the next meeting. The motion was carried by those present.

Treasurer's report, Charles McFarland, Treasurer: As of Aug. 31, the bank balance was \$33,927.83. Archdiocesan Bank CD values as of May 31: \$35,100.96 in a 12-month CD; \$98,232.63 in a 12-month CD; and \$7,351.54 in regular savings.

St. Francis Day report, Andy Beierwaltes, chairman: More than 200 tickets for the dinner have been

sold so far. The basket raffle this year will have many substantial gifts. Andy has targeted all past ads sending both parishes and advertisers a reminder. He reiterated that the ad book is our biggest source of funds. Dinner tickets will be mailed soon.

Educational and financial grants, George Kashmar, vice chair: There were three pending requests for mutual aid and no new requests for educational grants in the last 60 days. Anyone who knows of a deacon in need is asked to contact the vice chairman directly.

Summary of Executive Council meeting, William Stearns: The executive board is concerned with the amount of absentee council members. To deal with this, Fr. Mike will review at this meeting the job description of both VDCs and DDCs and ask for suggestions as to how to help our members administer their duties.

Report from the Associate Director, Dennis Colgan: TEND (The Ecumenical Network for the Diaconate), is sponsoring a presentation by Rev. Stephen Bouman entitled; "Diakonia: Consecrated Displaced Persons," Saturday, Oct. 22, at Evangelical Lutheran Church, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost of \$30 covers the speaker and light lunch. All are invited. Register by e-mail by Oct 1: Diane.Martyin@valpo.edu.

Convocation, Dennis Colgan, for Dan Welter: The 2012 Convocation will run from Friday, Jan. 27, to Sunday Jan. 29. Ten workshops will be available on Friday, along with a chance to get together with classmates and old friends. Workshops will start on Friday at 2 p.m. Matthew Kelly, who was the feature speaker at the priests' convocation, will be the keynote speaker. Twenty sessions are

planned for Saturday. The Saturday dinner and other amenities have been upgraded. Cardinal Francis George has made plans to attend Saturday and join us for dinner that evening as well as celebrating Mass with us on Sunday. The cardinal will present the ministry awards before the dinner.

Reports of VDCs and DDCs:

Vicariate I, Ray Loman, absent

Vicariate II, Paul Spalla: Their meeting with Bishop Francis Kane is scheduled for Nov. 19 at St. Mary of the Lake. They have completed their personal visits with all the deacons in their vicariate and will present that at the next meeting.

Vicariate III, Jose Vazquez, absent

Vicariate IV, Giulio Camerini: Their meeting is set for Sept. 17 with Bishop John Manz.

Vicariate V, Joseph Truesdale: Their meeting is set for Sept. 21 with Bishop Andrew Wypych. He will also honor their November date for the vicariate's All Souls Remembrance.

Vicariate VI, Dan Ragonese, absent

Report from Black deacons: Black deacons reported on the Aug. 27 Sunrise Prayer Services where 200 to 300 people attended. Each beach has a different theme. Fathers Smith, Thadeo and deacons Richard and Coleman were at Rainbow Beach, theme gang violence; Fathers Mel, Rom and Knotek and Deacons Roscoe and Harris were at 63rd Street Beach, theme bullying; Fathers Pflieger, Gabriel and Atoyebi and Deacons Gill and Cook were at Oakwood Beach, theme street violence; Fathers Curran and Dahm and Deacons Perez and Alveraz were at 31st Street Beach, theme domestic violence; Fathers Dowling

(Continued on page 9)

Diaconate Council Notes

(Continued from page 8)

and Eyerman and Deacons Watson, Pouncy and Coleman were at 12th Street Beach, theme racism. There was a problem with securing the permits for the beaches. This year the city charged \$1,500 for the permits. Money was partly raised from contributions, but some out-of-pocket expenses were incurred. Motion to cover the out-of-pocket expenses.

Hispanic deacons, Vicente Haro, absent

Women of the Diaconate: The next gathering of women will be Sept. 24. Father Chuck Dahm, OP will be there guest speaker on domestic violence.

Vicar’s report, Father Mike Ahlstrom: Report consisted of a training session for the VDCs and DDCs. A handbook was given out to each member and Fr. Mike went through a complete description of the information in the handbook. The training was to better prepare the coordinators so that they can assist the deacons of their respective areas when needed. Fr. Mike led a discussion about their roles, and the authority and responsibilities given to them. It is their responsibility to be supportive to the deacons in their vicariate and deaneries.

Fr. Mike also stated that the cardinal has asked him to stay on for the next year. In January, a search committee will work on a job description and begin the search for a deacon who will become the new associate vicar. This person will begin his duties in July. The support staff of the Diaconate Office will be restructured as Fr. Mike eases into a lesser role.

Next meeting is Nov. 12.

In Memoriam

Deacon Robert Matthews

Retired Deacon Robert Matthews, class of '96, died Aug. 6. Deacon Matthews, age 80, had ministered at St. Joseph Parish in Libertyville. During his years of ministry, he often visited the sick and was in charge of the ministers of care from the parish who volunteered at Advocate Condell Medical Center. Deacon Matthews also was instrumental in starting the PADS shelter in Libertyville.

His wife Janet described him as “very caring, very loyal, a very religious person and quite dedicated.”

In his younger years, Deacon Matthews served in the U.S. Navy, was a volunteer fireman in Libertyville and served as village trustee. He worked in business.

He is survived by his wife, Janet, five children and 13 grandchildren.

Deacon Peter Liberti

Deacon Peter Liberti, class of '76, died Aug. 1. He was 82 years old and ministered at All Saints-St. Anthony Church in Chicago.

Deacon Liberti ministered to the sick, was involved with RCIA, helped to train Eucharistic Ministers and often chaired various committees and functions in the parish. “He was very agreeable as far as the priests and people. He was very passive and everyone viewed him as a kind soul,” said his wife Beverly.

When he was working, he drove a truck for the Streets and Sanitation Department for the city of Chicago. He retired in 1993.

He is survived by Beverly, three children and six grandchildren.

Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have recently gone to the Lord: Blanche DeVita, wife of Deacon Frank DeVita, '74; Deacon Robert Matthews, '96; and Deacon Peter Liberti, '76.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: José Vazquez; Pete Morrissey; Bill Reinhart; Tom Coffey; Oscar Gonzalez; Steven and Millie Moore; Diane Leo; Richard Stojak; Florence Szady; Beatriz Chairez; Daniel and Maria Patiño; John Wilkenson; Ida Bohannon; Robert DeFiore; Alfia and Robert Sasseti; Linda O'Donnell; Susan Winblad; Janet Studer; Ed Ryan; Frank DeVita; Rosa Dominguez; Maria Cintron; Ernestina Ponce; Nubia Roza; Teresa Ochoa; José Uroza; Santos Soto; Jose Marrero; Laura Deters, daughter of Frank and Carolyn Beil; Cheryl Ann Gaca, daughter of Ron and Linda Morowczynski; Cheryl Becker; and Robert Brueggemann.

Please notify the Diaconate Office at (708) 366-8900 if you or someone in your family should be added to the sick list.



There is now a Facebook group for **Deacons of the Archdiocese of Chicago** which provides an opportunity for you to join and post photos, notices or information that might be of interest to the Diaconate Community.

Look us up, join, and let us know what the diaconate is up to.

St. Lawrence Day celebration

More than 200 people attended the annual St. Lawrence Day Mass and picnic Aug. 7 to commemorate Diaconate ordination. Members of the class of 1986 and the newly ordained classes of 2011 were recognized and honored at Mass held at St. Barbara Church in Brookfield.

“The St. Lawrence Day Festival of Ordinations was beautiful and the newly ordained and their wives felt very welcomed into our Diaconate community,” said Fr. Michael Ahlstrom, vicar for the Diaconate. “The liturgy was uplifting and the food great. My only disappointment was that so many silver jubilarians missed their celebration. Thank you to VDC Joe Truesdale and his helpers from Vicariate V, along with Jane and Dave Brencic from St. Barbara, for making this a great success.”



The newly ordained and the silver jubilarians were honored guests, and there was plenty of food for all.

Photos by Deacon Dan Dietsch



Views from the Vicar

(Continued from page 3)

about what it will be like for him when he grows older (John 21: 18). Responsibilities change, wisdom increases and energy and mobility decrease. It is a time when either we are spiritually transformed into a new place, or we can become bitter old fools. Denial is our demon and acceptance is our angel. Besides spiritual conversion, there are some practical realities.

The Diaconate community is aging and deacons are taking on a senior status or retiring even faster than we can ordain new deacons. Our median age is now 59. Of the 565 deacons who are active in the archdiocese, 112 are over the age of 70. Add to that another 85 who are retired and we have 197 deacons (30%) of senior age. If you are interested in numbers, we also have 106 deacons who are residing and ministering outside the archdiocese, and 25 who are on temporary or administrative leave, plus 83 inactive (AWOL) for a grand total of 864.

What does this reality mean for deacons as they reach their 70th birthday? When a deacon turns 70 years of age, he has three options:

1. Remain assigned and “active” as he is. There is no mandatory retirement age. The expectation is that if a deacon is in good health and circumstances permit him to stay active, then he will. However all deacons must honestly assess when they need to ease their pace and step down. The health of his wife is also to be taken into account.

2. He can become a “senior deacon” who is active, but slowing the pace. After 10 years of active ministry and reaching the age of 70, a deacon may request the status of “senior deacon.”

The senior deacon will remain assigned to the parish where he is serving and retain the faculties of a deacon in the Archdiocese of Chicago. There will be an

(Continued on page 11)



Views from the Vicar

(Continued from page 10)

expectation of five hours of ministry each month (in addition to liturgical ministry), unless health conditions or travel prevent this in a given month. And the deacon will participate in five hours of ongoing ministerial development each year. This status is not automatic upon reaching the age of 70. Nor may the pastor request this. A written request should come from the deacon.

3. The final status is “retired.” This is for those who are completely inactive, usually due to health. Fully retired deacons have no assignment, no requirements and they do not have archdiocesan faculties, but may do occasional ministry with the permission of the vicar and the pastor where the ministry will take place.

My experience as vicar has shown me the overwhelming majority of deacons are extremely generous and wanting to serve. Some are in great health. We have a 95-year-old deacon who tells me he is too active to become a senior deacon. What a blessing! The difficulty is that some do slow down and they are in the state of denial. Too often a pastor calls me and tells me the deacon can no longer function and needs to step back. The question the deacon needs to ask is if he is being honest about his limitations. It takes humility to acknowledge we have limitations.

Similarly there are some who should take a leave of absence, even when younger, because they are going through health problems. If they recover they can return to their assignment.

As I grow older God has graced me with a better prayer life. I enjoy people and ministry more than ever. While my physical agility and energy decrease, my willingness to turn things over to the Lord increases. But I do need to take better care of myself. I pray your aging will be a time of conversion and grace.

-- Father Michael Ahlstrom

Reflexiones del Vicario

(Continued from page 3)

demonio y aceptar es nuestro ángel. Además de la conversión espiritual, hay algunas realidades prácticas.

La Comunidad Diaconal está envejeciendo y los diáconos están optando por un estado “Senior” o retirándose, más rápido de lo que ordenamos nuevos diáconos. Nuestra edad media es ahora 59 años. De los 565 diáconos que están activos en la Arquidiócesis, 112 tienen más de 70 años. Añadiendo a esto, tenemos 85 que están retirados y 197 diáconos (30%) en edad de ser “Senior”. *Si les interesan los números, también tenemos 106 diáconos que viven y hacen ministerio fuera de la Arquidiócesis, 25 que están en licencia temporal o administrativa, más los 83 diáconos que están inactivos, haciendo un total de 864 diáconos.* ¿Cuál es la realidad para los diáconos que cumplen 70 años? Cuando un diácono cumple 70 años, tiene tres opciones:

1. Quedarse asignado como “Activo”, ya que no hay una edad determinada para retirarse. Se espera que los diáconos que estén en buen estado de salud y si las circunstancias lo permiten, de quede como diácono activo. Sin embargo, cada persona tiene que hacer una apreciación honesta si necesita disminuir su trabajo. También se tiene que tomar en consideración la salud de su esposa.

2. Puede optar por ser un “Senior Deacon”, que es un diácono un poco menos activo. Después de 10 años de ministerio activo y llegando a la edad de 70 años, un diácono puede elegir el status de “Senior Deacon”. El seguirá asignado a la parroquia donde sirve y retendrá sus facultades de diácono de la Arquidiócesis de Chicago. Se esperará que haga unas 5 horas de ministerio cada mes (además del ministerio litúrgico), a no ser que su salud o incapacidad de desplazarse se lo impidan. También se espera

que el diácono participe en 5 horas de desarrollo ministerial cada año. Esto no es algo automático al llegar a los 70 años, ni el pastor puede pedirlo. El diácono tiene que hacer, el mismo, un pedido por escrito al vicario.

El status final es el de “Retirado”. Esto es para aquellos que están completamente inactivos, usualmente por motivos de salud. Los diáconos que están **completamente retirados**, no tienen asignación o requerimiento alguno y **no tienen facultades arquidiocesanas**, pero pueden hacer un ministerio ocasional con el permiso del vicario y el pastor de la parroquia donde harán el ministerio.

Mi experiencia como vicario me ha enseñado que la mayoría de los diáconos son extremadamente generosos y quieren servir, y algunos gozan de excelente salud. Tenemos un diácono de 95 años que me dice que está muy ocupado para pedir ser Senior Deacon. Que bendición! La dificultad es cuando algunos tienen menos energía pero están en un estado de negación. Muy a menudo el pastor me llama y me dice que su diácono no puede seguir sirviendo y tiene que retirarse. La pregunta que el diácono tiene que hacerse es si está siendo honesto con sus limitaciones. Se necesita humildad para reconocer que tenemos limitaciones. De igual manera hay algunos que deberían tomar un retiro temporal, aunque no tengan edad para hacerlo, porque tienen problemas de salud y que cuando se mejoren pueden regresar a su asignación.

Al envejecer, Dios me ha dado una mejor vida de oración. Disfruto de la gente y del ministerio más que nunca. Mientras mi agilidad física y mi energía disminuyen, mi deseo de apoyarme en el Señor aumenta; pero necesito cuidarme más. Oro porque vuestro tiempo de envejecer sea un tiempo de conversión y gracia.

Padre Michael Ahlstrom

Help with Convocation

We are beginning to prepare for the 2012 convention, which will take place at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel on January 27-29. We would like to invite you to serve our deacon community by helping out with our communal liturgies for that weekend.

There are many ways in which deacons and wives can serve. Here are some of the ministries for which we need your help:

- ... Presider at Morning or Evening Prayer
- ... Deacon of Word or Eucharist at mass on Saturday and Sunday
- ... Lector
- ... Eucharistic minister
- ... Cantor
- ... Instrumentalist
- ... Sacristan
- ... Altar server
- ... Member of the Liturgy Committee for the Convocation
- ... Typist to help prepare our worship aid

As in 2010, our worship will be bilingual, in English and Spanish. Deacons and wives who speak English or Spanish or both are needed and will be welcomed. If you've never led Morning or Evening Prayer before, don't worry - we'll provide you with plenty of preparation beforehand.

If you're willing to help, please send an email to: james_pauwels@dell.com or contact the Diaconate Office at 708-366-8900.

Mass of remembrance

The Office of Assistance Ministry will hold an evening of remembrance for victims-survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their families. The Mass is to remember and pray for those who have died, carrying with them the pain of the abuse that happened to them or their loved one.

To commemorate the day, there will be an All Saints Day Mass at 6 p.m. Nov. 1 at Holy Family Church, 1080 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago. Immediately following the Mass, there will be a candlelight procession and vigil service in the Healing Garden.

For more information, contact the Office of Assistance Ministry at (312) 534-8267.

Numbers to know:

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816 Marengo Ave.
Forest Park, Ill. 60130
Phone (708) 366-8900
fax (708) 366-8968
Father Michael Ahlstrom,
Vicar for the Diaconate Community
email:
mahlstrom@archchicago.org
Dcn. Dennis Colgan, Assoc. Director
Email: dcolgan@archchicago.org
The Chicago Deacons Web site:
deacons.archchicago.org

The Upper Room (ph 888-808-8724) offers skilled listening, para-professional counseling, information and referral, suicide prevention and crisis intervention 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is staffed by trained volunteers. Through these services, the program desires to contribute to the spiritual development of diocesan priests, religious and deacons. All calls are confidential and anonymous.



At the St. Francis Day dinner, Deacon Dave Bencic, editor of *The Flame*, was presented with the St. Francis award for service to the Diaconate Community. From left are Fr. Bob Casey, pastor of St. Barbara parish; Deacon Dave Bencic; Fr. Mike Ahlstrom, Vicar to the Diaconate Community; and Deacon Dennis Cogan, Associate Director of the Diaconate. Congratulations to Dave on this well-deserved recognition.

Photo by Deacon Dan Dietsch