



# THE FLAME

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February - March 2012

## Convocation builds Diaconate spirit

By Deacon Dave Brencic

“Nowhere in the world have we seen so many deacons gathered in one place,” said Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar of Chicago’s Diaconate community, in his opening remarks at the 2012 Chicago Diaconate Convocation.

Focusing on the theme of “Deacon: Icon of Christ the Servant,” more than 650 deacons and wives – two-thirds of Chicago’s Diaconate community – attended the three-day convocation held in Schaumburg.

Cardinal Francis George not only addressed the convocation Saturday afternoon, he also attended the evening banquet and presided at Mass Sunday morning with four of Chicago’s auxiliary bishops. The cardinal made the biggest news at the convocation with the announcement that the 568 active deacons in the archdiocese would be receiving an archdiocesan stole as a gift from the cardinal. In the future, deacons will be able to wear



Fr. Mike gives a celebratory tip of the cap at the close of the Deacon Convocation.

Photo by Dan Dietsch

the stole at ordinations, deacon funerals or whenever they gather as a body.

In his remarks, Cardinal George focused on the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, the impact of the council on the Catholic Church and the world at large, and some of the struggles and challenges the Church faces today.

“The sense of the council, the purpose of Pope John (XXIII) is I think something that has to be constantly recalled or we misunderstand everything else. If we understand that, everything else falls into place and makes sense,” the cardinal said.

Cardinal George went on to reflect on the ongoing tensions between faith and culture, and the different ways the mission of the church is being stymied.

“Our moral beliefs exclude the Church from society,” Cardinal George said.

The convocation’s keynote address

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## Deacons, wives honored for outstanding ministry

By Deacon Dave Brencic

Deacon Leroy Gill Jr.’s mission and ministry have been devoted to raising awareness of the violent deaths suffered by young people in Chicago.

Deacon Joe Winblad has spent countless hours working with the poor from traveling to New Orleans to help victims of Hurricane Katrina to building bunk beds for a homeless shelter on Chicago’s West Side.

Deacon Chick O’Leary spreads the good news by his work with the Flame newsletter and has organized a number of evangelizing and educational events.

Frank and Betty Gildea are examples of diaconal ministry as individuals and as a couple working with the poor and hungry in a local soup kitchen.

Nancy Bishop is an advocate for children and their families in her role as religious education coordinator and incorporates the corporal works of mercy as part of her life.

All of these men and women were honored for their ministries at this year’s 2012 Chicago Diaconate Convocation. Francis Cardinal George and Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar of the Diaconate, presented the awards.

Gill, of Holy Angels in Chicago, received the St. Stephen the Deacon Award for spearheading sunrise services along Lake Michigan the

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## Humble servants are we

It was one of those days where I felt God was truly guiding my steps. I went over to church Sunday morning to help out with something and then one thing just seemed to lead to another.

While working with the Hospitality Committee, I was able to pass on to several people the news about Jean, an elderly woman and member of the group, who had gone into the hospital. The woman has little or no family and I mentioned to the committee that she would probably appreciate a phone call or a visit.

On the way over to church, I ran into a longtime parishioner whose father had just died. She had come to meet with our music director

about the funeral Mass, but he was running late. It was good to talk with Nan about her dad and to listen to how her family was coping. She seemed relieved when I assured her that the readings and songs the family had chosen would be fine.

In church, I was stopped by Paul who is having serious marital problems. He said he was trying to reconcile with his wife and understand the personal problems she was dealing with. So far, she had refused to seek any kind of counseling and he felt frustrated. Paul said he found comfort in prayer and going to Mass and I told him that I would be praying for him and his wife and would support them any way I can.

My morning ended with a visit to the hospital and bringing Eucharist

to Jean, the ill hospitality committee member. She too poured out her feelings and frustrations with her illness, not knowing what kind of treatment would be in store or if she would be forced to sell her home and move into a nursing facility.

Once again I listened and tried to comfort her the best way I could. We prayed together and when I left she seemed a little more at peace.

It's a humbling feeling when God uses us - that's what we have been called to do ... to be the face, the ears, the hands, the voice of God to the people around us.

Accept me Lord, as thy humble servant. Let me be thy instrument.

Keep the fire burning,

Deacon Dave Brencic, Editor

## The Flame

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## Somos servidores humildes

Fue uno de esos días cuando sentí que Dios realmente estaba guiando mis pasos. Fui a la iglesia el domingo por la mañana para ayudar y una cosa pareció llevarme a otra.

Mientras estaba trabajando en el comité de hospitalidad, tuve la oportunidad de avisar a varias personas que Jean, una persona mayor y miembro del grupo, estaba en el hospital. La señora tenía poca o ninguna familia y les mencioné que ella probablemente apreciaría una llamada de teléfono o una visita.

Al ir a la iglesia me encontré con una parroquiana de muchos años cuyo padre acababa de morir. Ella había venido para encontrarse con nuestro director de música para la música del funeral pero él estaba atrasado. Fue bueno hablar con Nan acerca de su padre y escuchar como estaba la familia haciendo frente a esta pérdida. Ella pareció estar aliviada cuando le dije que las canciones y las lecturas que la familia había escogido, eran las correctas.

En la iglesia, me encontré con Paul quien está teniendo problemas maritales serios. Me dijo que estaba tratando de reconciliarse con su

esposa y tratar de entender los problemas que ella tenía. Hasta ahora ella había rehusado buscar algún tipo de consejería y eso lo tenía muy frustrado. Paul dijo que él encontraba consuelo en asistir a la misa y rezar. Le dije que yo estaría rezando por él y su esposa y que los ayudaría en lo que fuera posible.

Mi mañana terminó con una visita al hospital a llevarle comunión a Jean, la persona del comité de hospitalidad que estaba enferma.

Ella también me llenó de sus problemas y frustraciones por su enfermedad, sin saber que tratamiento tendría y si se vería forzada a vender su casa y trasladarse a un asilo de ancianos.

Otra vez, escuché y traté de consolarla lo mejor que pude. Rezamos juntos y cuando me marché, ella parecía más tranquila.

Es una experiencia de mucha humildad cuando Dios nos usa, eso es lo que estamos llamados a hacer... ser la cara, los oídos, las manos, la voz de Dios para la gente que nos rodea.

Acéptame, Señor, como tu humilde servidor, Hazme tu instrumento.

Mantengan el fuego encendido

Diácono Dave Brencic, Editor

## Views from the Vicar

Our convocation at the Marriott Renaissance was a highlight of my 43 years in ministry. I felt similarly at our convocation two years ago, but this was even better. The energy, love and positivity I felt from the 640 participants will sustain me for a long time. Matthew Kelly challenged us to be “game changers” who reach out to the 93% of Catholics who have minimal involvement in their faith. Cardinal George spoke of the original intent of Vatican II to reach out to the world and unify it. Unfortunately, we have often looked at our Church with a political paradigm that divides us, rather than an ecclesial paradigm that unites us and makes us a unifying force for the world. I think the question we all need to answer and put into action is how we can be a positive force to unite

people, while calling them to a deeper faith. I am hopeful that our renewed evangelization effort that Deacon Council Chairman Bill Stearns announced will be one way of doing that.

Congratulations to all the deacons and wives who received special recognition. I was especially pleased to announce that Cardinal George is recognizing all deacons active in ministry in the archdiocese by giving them a stole, similar to the priests’ stoles with the logo of our archdiocese embroidered on it. This can be worn at ordinations, deacon funerals and other occasions where deacons sit as a body. Those at the convocation had the opportunity to try on the stole and tell us if they want a small, medium or large size. For those not at the convocation, you can stop by the Diaconate office to try samples on so we have an accurate size. Or you can call if you

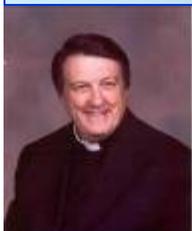
think you know your size. Your name will be sewn into the stole, so it is imperative to get the correct sizes ahead of time. It will take some time for these to be made and distributed.

The revised draft of our official Deacon Policy Book has been completed. It will be presented to the Diaconate Council for its approval at its next meeting March 10. Please read the draft on our website ([deacons.archchicago.org](http://deacons.archchicago.org)) and email, mail or call me, Dennis Colgan or your Deanery Deacon Coordinator with any concerns or suggestions for improvement. After March 10, it will be given to the Archdiocesan Policy Committee for review and to Cardinal George for his approval.

This spring we will begin a search for the new position of associate

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Reflexiones del Vicario



Mensaje de nuestro Vicario.

Nuestra Convocación en el Hotel Marriott Renaissance ha sido lo mejor de mis 43

años de ministerio. Sentí casi igual como hace dos años; pero esta vez fue mucho mejor. La energía, el amor y el positivismo que sentí de los 640 participantes me acompañarán por mucho tiempo. Matthew Kelly nos desafió a ser “innovadores” que lleguen al 93% de los Católicos que tienen un compromiso mínimo con su fe. El Cardenal George habló de la intención original del Vaticano II de llegar a todo el mundo y unificarlo. Desafortunadamente muy a menudo vemos a nuestra Iglesia en un ambiente político que nos divide, en vez de verla de una manera eclesial que nos une y nos presenta al mundo como una fuerza unificadora. Creo que la pregunta que todos debemos responder y ponerla en acción, es en cómo

podemos ser una fuerza positiva que una a la gente, mientras los guiamos a una fe más profunda. Estoy esperando que el renovado esfuerzo de evangelización que anunció Bill Stearns nos ayudará a alcanzar esta meta.

Felicidades a todos los diáconos y sus esposas que recibieron un reconocimiento especial. Me dió mucho gusto anunciar que el Cardenal George está reconociendo a todos los diáconos activos en ministerio, regalándoles una estola similar a la de los sacerdotes, con el logo de la Arquidiócesis bordado en ella. Así podrán usarla cada vez que los diáconos se reúnan como grupo en ordenaciones, funerales de diáconos u otras ocasiones similares.

Los que asistieron a la Convocación, tuvieron la oportunidad de probarse las estolas para determinar el tamaño que necesitan. Los que no asistieron a nuestra pasada convocación, pueden pasar por la oficina a medirse las estolas para ordenar la que mejor les convenga. Estas

estolas tendrán bordado el nombre de cada uno, así es que es imperativo el ordenar el tamaño correcto y ordenar la estola con tiempo. De todas maneras tomará algún tiempo el hacerlas y distribuirlas.

La copia revisada de nuestro manual de diáconos ya está completa. Será presentada al Concilio para su aprobación en su próxima reunión del 10 de Marzo. Por favor lee una copia en nuestra red ([deacons.archchicago.org](http://deacons.archchicago.org)) y mándanos un e-mail o llámame a mí o a Dennis Colgan con sugerencias para mejorarla. Después del 10 de Marzo entregaremos la copia al comité de pólizas Arquidiocesanas para ser revisada y para la aprobación del Cardenal.

Esta primavera comenzaremos la búsqueda para la nueva posición de vicario asociado, quien compartirá responsabilidades conmigo el próximo año. Este rol va más allá de las responsabilidades de Dennis Colgan y de Enrique Alonso como directores asociados. Si alguno de

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## Phoebe's Corner

### An interview with Teresa Pennix-Gill

By Helene Albano

As we begin 2012, I thought we might spend the next year learning from our sisters, as they share from their rich experience in ministry. For this issue, I spoke with Teresa Pennix-Gill concerning her ministry within the archdiocese. Teresa and her husband, Deacon LeRoy Gill, are representatives of the Black Catholic Deacons of Chicago (BCDC). The Gills have four children, and seven grandchildren. They work in collaboration with various organizations and ministries to address the needs of the community, paying particular attention to family life and human concerns. Here is an edited version of our conversation.

**Q. How did your journey to ministry begin?**

**A.** Much of my career was centered on my own dreams of personal gain and success. Striving to obtain the "American Dream," a life of fine living, free of worry and wants, is exactly that, "A Dream." Spending significant time in the "Word," and reflecting on my own life helped me to understand that my purpose and living is for God. In January of 2002, my husband recognized his "call" and together, we began the journey. His call to the Diaconate was a life-changing event for both of us. This four-year experience exposed us to the many challenges facing God's people along with the countless opportunities to fully participate and make a difference. We studied, prayed and discerned God's direction for our lives and understood that we must share God's Word and our experiences with others.

When LeRoy was ordained a deacon in May of 2006, I successfully completed a Certificate of Studies from the University of Saint Mary of the Lake. The following year, January 2007, I began to re-create a new career for myself. After 21 years in the aviation industry, my "good government job" was transferred to Dallas, Texas. There was no desire to go to Texas, but I was not old enough to retire. I had planned my future carefully, calculated my retirement to the nickel and placed my confidence in the provision of a government pension. The decision to relocate or stay would impact our finances significantly. I struggled in my spirit. I was afraid. Should I follow my heart, should I immerse myself, submit myself unto my passion? I prayed intently asking for wisdom and grace. I could either chase behind the security of my high-paying salary, in Texas, or trust God to guide and provide in the passion I have for family ministry. I chose the latter.

**Q. How have you had the opportunity to develop and use your gifts in ministry?**

**A.** My husband and I were recruited by the Archdiocese of Chicago Family Life Marriage coordinator to facilitate workshops to fragile families - providing couples an understanding of what it takes to build a healthy, mature relationship, which will strengthen their families and communities. Through these workshops, we empowered families with specific skills and the hope of success in their relationships in their families. Additionally, we spearheaded other initiatives highlighting the importance of family and faith, fatherhood, active parenting,



Teresa Pennix-Gill supports her husband, Deacon Leroy Gill as he accepts the St. Stephen award at the Deacon Convocation.

Photo by Dan Dietsch

violence prevention, just to name a few. One of my most recent projects is in collaboration with the Archdiocesan Women's Committee to publish a Community Resource Services Directory. The directory lists an array of support services related to employment, financial assistance, health, housing, legal assistance, parenting, senior services, outreach to the formerly incarcerated, etc. These services help people coping with everyday problems. Jesus fed and attended to the needs of people -- then he preached the word.

In May of 2010, I received my master's in Leadership for Family Ministry and Faith Formation from Dominican University. It prepared me for full-time professional leadership in the Catholic Church. The program challenged me to expand my understanding of the complex issues facing families today along with enhancing my skills as a teacher, facilitator, organizer, and leader in various circumstances and settings.

**Q. In what ways did your faith support and strengthen you to meet the challenges of ministry?**

**A.** We are commanded to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, to love others as we love ourselves, to make disciples, and live out the Gospel. The only way I can carry out this mission is by acknowledging that God is God and demonstrating

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**Welcome from the *Institute for Diaconal Studies (IDS)*!**

The University of Saint Mary of the Lake Rector/President, Rev. Msgr. Dennis Lyle, with the counsel and approval from Francis Cardinal George, has made some changes in how this institution will present itself to the outside world. From now on, University of Saint Mary of the Lake will be the primary “brand” name for the overall institution; its component parts will be referred to separately as *institutes* since each is distinct from the seminary program with its own administration, faculty and student body - all under USML administration.

Therefore the parts of the university are: *Mundelein Seminary; Institute for Diaconal Studies; Institute for Lay Formation; Institute for Ongoing Formation; Instituto de Liderazgo Pastoral; and the Liturgical Institute.*

*IDS* was selected as the formation program’s new name to recognize that it is distinct from both the Seminary program and other formation programs on campus. It also honors the stronger academic dimension mandated by the *National Directory* (for diaconate formation). In my mind, the university name changes more closely align USML with other universities that have several components, schools or institutes as part of their institution.

For example, I graduated from Northwestern University, but attended its Medill School of Journalism. And NU has many other components as well, such as the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Kellogg School of Management, Bienen School of Music, etc. Sure, it might take all of us some time to get *Institute for Diaconal Studies* gently rolling off our tongues. But regardless of the name, *IDS* continues to ask your prayers so that it might continue its crucial archdiocesan ministry of forming great deacons for God’s people.

**INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES**

IDS is very blessed by the generosity of deacons and wives who respond to the institute’s needs for extended staff in pursuing its mission of forming deacons for the Church and the archdiocese. As IDS continues to evolve, it has developed a new ministry, which began with the new year -- Vocation Liaison Coordinators or VLCs.

VLCs will be assigned whenever a potential applicant or a pastor makes a request to begin the formal process of Inquiry regarding Diaconate formation. The VLCs (deacons and their wives) will contact the potential applicant/ wife to arrange a personal visit and begin an important discernment dialogue.

“This personal visit will provide insight on several key areas: vocation, discernment to diaconal ministry, pastor/parish support, wife and family support, present and potential future program requirements and the requisite pre-application form,” said Deacon Bob Puhala, director of the IDS. “VLCs also will encourage the inquirer to participate in the formation program’s on-line five-day discernment retreat and attend one of the IDS’s Exploring the Diaconate sessions.”

(The next Exploring the Diaconate is scheduled for noon on Sunday, Feb.19, at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat Center and includes Sunday Mass.)

In addition to ministering to potential and formal Inquirers, the VLCs will develop a continuing relationship and dialogue with the sponsoring pastor -- who is a key figure in any potential application to the IDS.

IDS is eager to add several couples to its VLC roster. If you are interested in more information about this new ministry, please

contact the IDS at (847) 837-4563. Currently, five deacons and their wives, from all over the archdiocese, have undergone training and formation to serve as VLCs. Their ministerial biographies are offered below:

-- Deacon Perry Duderstadt, '82, is assigned to Our Lady of the Brook in Northbrook; current parish ministries include the diaconal ministries of Word, Liturgy and Charity. Extra-parochial ministry includes adult faith formation for the parish, deanery and vicariate, and as an instructor for the Institute for Diaconal Studies. Deacon Duderstadt is retired from Allstate where he worked for 29 years. He has been married to his wife Mary Ann for 43 years and blessed with three daughters and four grandchildren.

Mary Ann Duderstadt serves Our Lady of the Brook parish as a Children’s Liturgy of the Word catechist, lector, Extraordinary Minister, Minister of Care and a member of the Liturgy Planning team. With her husband, she is a catechist for the Vicariate II Adult Confirmation program and serves as a member of the Admissions and Scrutinies Board for the Institute for Diaconal Studies. Mary Ann is retired from School District 23 (Prospect Heights).

-- Deacon Davis Fair, '01, is assigned to Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica in Chicago. His current parish ministries include RCIA, Parish Council and Liturgy Committee. He also is on the Planning Team for Diaconate Convocations and a volunteer at Zacchaeus House. Deacon Fair has served as coordinator for the African American Deacons, a member of the Diaconate Council Planning Team, volunteer for Bonaventure House, and, with his wife, served as a mentor couple for the Institute for Diaconal Studies. A former union official for 27 years prior to his ordination, Deacon Fair is married to his wife Roberta for 53

## Stritch Retreat House update

By Deacon Richard F. Hudzik

Wasn't it the 1960s which first heard Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane tell us to "feed your head?" Presumably, she was offering the destructive advice to use so-called "recreational drugs." However, if we might redeem that perhaps tired expression of "feed your head," we can use the concept to enrich our imaginations.

If we can "feed" ourselves with specific images of God's reflection in creation, stories of a particular life in God's Kingdom, of a specific life as Jesus would want us to live, we can take the first step toward empowering ourselves to communicate that rich and rewarding way of being to those to whom we minister.

Using imagery and references to life as understood by our congregations is a way to make what we preach come alive. Indeed, that was partly the rhetorical strategy Jesus employed with his contemporaries as he spoke about flowers, harvests, birds of the air, foxes, servants and stewards. It is sadly sometimes a difficult task for us who are mostly city-dwellers, to recover what it means to sow seeds or tend a vineyard or look for wayward sheep. We sometimes need to "feed" our imaginations so as to come to a richer understanding of what Jesus was preaching.

I offer all that by way of prelude to encourage us to continue to develop our own repertoire of stories and allusions by which we can engage others as we tell the story of the Good News. To that end, I want to endorse to you a wonderful novel written by Michael O'Brien entitled, "The Father's Tale." It is a thoroughly Catholic tale, which restates how the story of the Prodigal Son might be enacted today. It is moreover a rich theological reflection on the Good

Shepherd, along with a view of how the Theology of the Body is lived out concretely between a man and a woman.

By no means does the extensive theological fare of the novel turn this big (more than 1,000 pages) book into a tedious sermon. The story of the father searching the world, from country to country, for his son who has mysteriously disappeared is a gripping adventure. The characters encountered along the way suggest those met in Dostoyevsky, in Russian Orthodox mysticism, in Chesterton and Lewis. I encourage you to pick up this book and let it wash over you as you reflect on whether our love is as generous and kenotic as the father in the story. Indeed, can we strive to have our love be as kenotic as the Father's? You will be rewarded in reading this book and, if you are enriched, so too will your congregations.

Speaking of enriching yourself and your congregation — below is the balance of the Stritch-sponsored retreats for this fiscal year. Even if you don't see anything that matches your schedule, know that you are always welcome for a private retreat. Rooms are available almost every day.

Feb. 17-19: Deacons and wives. Rev. Michael McGovern, the energetic and prayerful pastor of Church of St. Mary's in Lake Forest, is your retreat leader who will preach "Relying on the Power of God," a series of reflections on the power of God manifested in Christ's miracles, the Paschal Mystery, the sacraments and prayer.

March 16-18: Deacons and wives (in Spanish). Rev. Claudio Diaz, pastor of Mission Juan Diego, is your retreat leader.

April 20-22: Deacons' wives and widows. Dr. Kate Wiskus is the retreat leader. Wiskus will preach on "Collaborators in Grace." She is associate director of formation at Mundelein Seminary, author of "Pastoring Multiple Parishes" from Loyola Press, as well as author of



numerous articles. She will focus on how women are called to be co-workers in the kingdom and for full participation in growing the kingdom.

April 27-29: Deacons. Deacons Chick O'Leary and Richard Hudzik are the leaders for this retreat. They will preach on "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants." The retreat will be a prayerful exploration of how deacons today have been gifted by the great teachers of the past, whether from the Patristic Era, the Middle Ages or from modern days, including other deacons, our families, and other laity and clergy who inspire and encourage us today.

May 4-6: Deacons and wives. The Sisters of the Apostles of the Interior Life are the leaders of this retreat for deacons and wives. This offering is presented by a community of women religious whose origins are in Italy, but who today serve in the United States as spiritual directors and evangelizers of students and faculty at the University of Kansas and at Texas A&M University. Sister Debbie Li and Sister Loredana Mazzei will reflect on "Our Call to Holiness in Today's Distracted World." You can view their biographies by choosing the "Vocation Stories" tab on the sisters' website at [www.apostolevitainteriore.it](http://www.apostolevitainteriore.it). This is a new offering for Stritch and we are quite excited to share the sisters with you.

May 18-20: Deacons and wives (in Spanish). Chicago's Deacon Jesus Blanco is your retreat leader.

-- Deacon Richard F. Hudzik, D.Min., is director of Cardinal Stritch Retreat House.

Diaconate Council Notes January 14, 2012

The following members were present: Executive members present were: William Stearns, chairman; George Kashmar, vice-chairman; Sal Lema, secretary; Dave Egan, past chair; Father Michael Ahlstrom, vicar; and Dennis Colgan, associate director. VDCs: Jose Vazquez, Giulio Camerini, Joseph Truesdale and Dan Ragonese. DDCs: James Minor, Dennis Robak, Dan Welter, Frank Beil, Edward O'Leary, William Pouncy, Rodrigo Silva, Chris VIRRUSO, Sr., John Gaughan, Javier Pineda, Richard Tryjefaczka, Ignacio Alvarez, and Thomas Bartholomew. Other members present: Pedro Sedano, representing the Hispanic Community; Vicente Haro, Peggy VIRRUSO and Margaret Colgan representing the wives of the Diaconate Community; and Dave Kalina, representing the Institute for Diaconal Studies.

Treasurer's report, Charles McFarland: Treasurer McFarland sent his report. As of Dec. 20, 2011, the bank balance was \$49,877.48. Archdiocesan Bank CD values as of Nov. 30, 2011: \$35,296.12 in a six-month CD at 1.20%; \$35,398.03 in a 12-month CD at 1.70%; \$35,305.43 in a 12-month CD at 1.70% interest and \$35,276.13 in a 12-month CD at 1.70% interest.

Convocation report, Dan Welter: All is ready for the January Convocation. The speakers are all in place, the hotel is set and all the last-minute items including the booklets are being handled. Financial assistance is still available. As of this meeting, 584 people have registered, which includes 349 men and 235 women. 40% of the deacons had still not registered. Lists were distributed to the DDCs asking them to call all the deacons in their deanery that have not responded.

Vicar's report, Fr. Mike Ahlstrom: Father Mike stated that the top priority of the council is to promote the upcoming Convocation. Bishop Kane will be out-of-town and unable to meet with the Vicariate on Sunday. Father Mike will head up the Vicariate II gathering himself.

Father Mike shared the good news that an archdiocesan stole will be given to each deacon who is in active status. The new stole will have the Chicago Archdiocese logo that matches the ones given to the priests. The announcement of this gift and the donor will be announced at the Convocation. Whenever deacons gather as a body they will wear the archdiocesan stoles. These events include ordinations, funeral of a deacon and other special archdiocesan gatherings where the Diaconate will sit as a body. The newly ordained will receive the stole as an ordination gift. Measurements for the stoles will be taken at the Convocation. Those not attending will be contacted to receive their sizes.

We are overdue to make our transitions as a council. Those who have been absent frequently are telling us that they do not want to extend their term. If some would like to pass the baton you need to let us know and help us find a replacement for your deanery.

The newly revised policy book is virtually complete. Cardinal George and archdiocesan officials will review it for approval. It is available online. Diaconate leaders should become familiar with its content.

The annual mass for deceased priests in November will now include deceased deacons. Deacons may attend. And should be vested in alb and archdiocesan stole.

Associate director's report, Dennis

Colgan: Dennis stated that he has been placing most of his efforts into the upcoming Convocation. He stated that the council will have badges showing their office. He urged the members to assist in the greeting of those attending.

Report from IDS representative, Dave Kalina: Dave Kalina spoke about the changes in formation. Formation is now under the name Institute for Diaconal Studies. Their January newsletter was sent out to every deacon online. The next issue will have information on how the women are participating. He noted that our program is compatible with other dioceses around the country. At present, 60% of the women are participating, 40% are attending classes, 45% are attending the Called and Gifted program. Chairman Stearns asked that Dave bring copies of the newsletter to the next meeting for the council to see.

Reports of VDCs and DDCs:

Vicariate I, Ray Loman, absent

Vicariate II, Paul Spalla: Their meeting with Bishop Kane was held Nov. 18 at St. Mary of the Lake Church. Sixty-seven people turned out, including all DDCs. They had a potluck supper. Bishop Kane was present. Dan Welter spoke on Deacon transfers. Father Ahlstrom was present as well. From the Presbyteral Council, the October count of parishes and missions shows that since 1990, the count has decreased from 582 to 451. The largest drops are in Vicariate V and VI. It was also noted that the priests enjoy reading the Flame.

Vicariate III, Jose Vazquez: The Vicariate has not set a date to meet with their new bishop, Most Reverend Alberto Rojas as yet. He believes it will be in February or

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## Council Notes

*(Continued from page 7)*

March. They are working with deacons who may be moved this year. William Pouncy mentioned that discussions are under way about deacons changing parishes. The fear is that no replacement will be given to the parish from where a deacon leaves.

Vicariate IV, Giulio Camerini: Giulio stated that he is meeting with Bishop John Manz on Jan.23. The bishop will help with the transfers. Some have questions regarding the rule that anyone under 65 is eligible for transfer if he has completed 10 years at his present assignment. Some have stated that they would rather retire than be transferred.

Vicariate V, Joseph Truesdale: No activity in the English community. The Spanish community of Vicariate V met with Bishop Wypych Jan. 9.

Vicariate VI, Dan Ragonese: Their annual meeting and dinner with Bishop Perry was held at St. Basil/ Visitation Nov. 21. It was the biggest turnout they have had. Father Clem, the pastor, prepared and paid for the dinner. In their discussions many who were present stated that they were unhappy over the proposed revised transfer policy.

Report from Black Deacons, William Pouncy: There is a concern within the black Diaconate community of moving deacons over the age of 61. There are also concerns about having to serve at more than one parish.

Hispanic Deacons, Pedro Sedano: Deacon Al Lopez who is a retired police officer recently presented a workshop about gangs, their colors, and territory on the streets. It was very interesting. Sedano believes

that this workshop would be beneficial for all deacons.

Women of the Diaconate, Marge Colgan: Women of the Diaconate meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the Diaconate Office. They will have a table by the registration area at the Convocation to greet women as they walk in.

Old business: Memorial cards in Spanish and English are being printed. They will be given out at the Convocation.

New business: Chairman Stearns talked about the need for evangelization. He stated that the office within the archdiocese no longer exists and that the Catholics Come Home commercials are all repeats from last year. He believes that there should be some effort in every parish. The chairman made a motion that a committee made up of one deacon from each deanery be established to implement plans for the individual parishes and to report their findings to the council. The motion was seconded by Dan Welter. Discussion ensued. Vice-Chair Kashmar suggested that the size of this committee should be smaller in its exploratory stage. His suggestion was to have one member from each vicariate rather than every deanery, for a total of six members. He further suggested that their direction should be more towards evangelization looking through the ministry of the Diaconate. Motion on Evangelization Committee was approved.

Collection at Convocation. Two years ago a collection was taken for Haiti. Since then, it is recognized that there is still a great need there. It was suggested that this year's collection be given to Catholic Relief Services specific to the needs in Haiti.

Next meeting March 10, 2012.

## Wiskus to lead women's retreat



The next Diaconate Women's Retreat on April 20-22 will be facilitated by Dr. Kate Wiskus.

Kate brings a wealth of wisdom, spirit, warmth and service in the topic of this year's retreat entitled "Collaborators in Grace." Women are called to be co-workers in the kingdom and collaborators in grace. Through our baptism, we are anointed for full participation in the growing of the kingdom. How are we formed for this important and essential role? Who are our models? What will others see if we are "living worthy of the call we have received"?

Kate serves as associate dean of formation, director of the office of Field Education and teaches primarily pastoral life courses at the University of St. Mary of the Lake. She is co-author of the book "Pastoring Multiple Parishes: An Emerging Model of Pastoral Leadership." She and her husband Ken will celebrate their 43rd anniversary and they enjoy their time with their three children and six grandchildren.

Plan on participating in this special Spirit-filled weekend and Saturday afternoon tea. Bring your favorite cup and saucer. Reserve your place by calling the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House at (847) 566-6060. Share the news with other women in the Diaconate community. Sandwich fixings are available at the retreat center in case you haven't had dinner when you arrive. Chris Grable and Mary Lou Thompson are co-chairs.

## Deacons, wives honored for outstanding ministry

*(Continued from page 1)*

last two summers “incorporating music, prayers, homiletics and a merging of a variety of lay people, religious, priests and deacons. All this to promote peace and responsibility,” read his nomination letter.

Winblad, of St. Patrick in Lemont, who was honored with the St. Lawrence Award for his work with the poor and needy, “has devoted days and weeks to improve conditions and rehabbing facilities for Hope’s on the Way and local Chicago projects. He leads many of the young people of his parish in service trips to help others who are recovering from natural disasters,” read his nomination letter. “While supposedly retired, he has remained an ever-active deacon and inspirational man of faith and action to those in need.”

O’Leary, of St. Lambert in Skokie, was the recipient of the St. Philip Award, given for ministry in the field of evangelization and Ministry of the Word. O’Leary, who lays out and designs the Flame newsletter serving the Diaconate Community,

also has organized programs with nationally known speakers who focus on the theological heritage of the church.

O’Leary’s nomination read in part: “This man in his own practical way has been instrumental in sharing and facilitating the gospel with a large number of the Church in Chicago. He empowers other deacons to be evangelizers and to be good at whatever it is that they do.”

The Gildeas, of St. Elizabeth Seton in Orland Hills, recipients of the Shared Ministry Award, were described as a “precious couple (who) are a great role model for all of us and are true apostles for Jesus Christ.” Regarding their work with the poor, “they feed the physical and spiritual needs of humanity,” the nomination read.

Bishop, also of St. Elizabeth Seton, received this year’s St. Priscilla Award for service to the Church and the Diaconate. In the wake of the devastating tornado that hit Joplin, Mo., last spring, Bishop organized the school and R.E. children and the entire parish to buy Christmas gifts for the storm victims. She was able to get a trucking company to donate its time and space to transport all the gifts and contacted Catholic Charities to pick up and deliver the presents.

## Views from the Vicar

*(Continued from page 3)*

vicar who will share my responsibilities with me next year. This role is expanded beyond what Dennis Colgan and Enrique Alonso do as associate directors. If you would like to see the job description or would be interested in serving on the search committee, please contact me.

Accompanying this issue of The Flame will be a list of our spring workshops. Please see what is of interest and helpful to you and sign up today. I am praying you have planned a spiritual “game changer” with your Lenten observance this year. May our Lord bless you with a great Lent!

*Father Michael Ahlstrom*

P.S. Those participating in the entire convocation receive 12 hours of ongoing formation credit. Those participating only on Saturday and Sunday receive 9 hours of credit.

## Reflexiones del Vicario

*(Continued from page 3)*

ustedes quiere ver la descripción de esta posición o está interesado en servir en el comité para la elección, por favor contactenme.

Acompañando esta revista *The Flame*, encontrarán una lista de seminarios. Por favor vean lo que les interesa y que les servirá en su ministerio, e inscribanse ahora. Estoy orando para que todos ustedes ya tengan una “innovación” para esta Cuaresma.

Que el Señor los bendiga y tengan una Cuaresma especial!

*Padre Michael Ahlstrom*

P.S. Los que participaron en toda la Convocación recibirán 12 horas de educación continua. Los que participaron solo el sábado y domingo, solo recibirán 9 horas de crédito.

## Bishop Perry to lead trip to Holy Land



Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Perry will be leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land Nov. 23 to Dec. 1.

The trip includes round-trip airfare from Chicago to Tel Aviv, Israel; a four-night stay at the four-star Moriah Classic Hotel in Jerusalem; a three-night stay at the four-star Royal Plaza Hotel in Tiberias; daily breakfast and dinner

at the hotels; and sightseeing. The cost is \$3,499 per person double occupancy. If traveling by yourself, add \$499.

Each pilgrim will be given a travel copy of the Bible where passages matching each religious site will be recited. Mass will be celebrated at select sites.

Obtain enrollment forms from Bishop Perry’s office, P.O. Box 733, South Holland, Ill. 60473 or email [justus418@hotmail.com](mailto:justus418@hotmail.com) or call (708) 339-2474.

A \$600 per person deposit is required to book space. Final payment is due Aug. 10.

## Convocation builds Diaconate spirit

(Continued from page 1)

was given by inspirational Catholic speaker Matthew Kelly, who has addressed groups around the world and written 12 books, which have appeared on best-seller lists of the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and USA Today.

Kelly has done consulting work for such companies as Pepsi, Proctor and Gamble and the Department of Defense, and has a core message that challenges people to be the best version of themselves.

Kelly said as Catholics we have forgotten our own story and have “allowed the anti-Catholic American media to tell the story for us and that is a tragedy.”

While the church has made its share of mistakes, the historical contributions of the church to the world and society have been overlooked, said Kelly who noted that “the tide in American Catholicism is going out. Business as usual will not stem the tide.”



Cardinal George celebrated the Mass that brought the Convocation to a close.

Photo by Dan Dietsch

In the face of sobering statistics such as declining Mass attendance and the increasing number of closed Catholic schools, Kelly conducted a study of 200 parishes across the country and 3,000 interviews of “engaged Catholics,” who only number about 7% of the American Catholic Church. Kelly said these



Matthew Kelly's presentation enlightened the gathering and challenged the Diaconate Community to become game-changers.

Photo by Dan Dietsch

are people who volunteer in their parishes and consistently contribute financially to the church.

Kelly gave those in attendance a sneak preview of the study's findings regarding what makes the 7% different from their 93% counterparts.

In his interviews, Kelly found “four signs of a dynamic Catholic.” Such individuals have a daily routine of prayer in their lives; continually study and learn about their faith; are generous with their time, talent and treasure; and willingly evangelize and share their faith with others.

Kelly challenged his audience to focus on prayer, continuing education, generosity and evangelizing with an eye toward incrementally increasing the number of engaged Catholics.

“As deacons, you are a game changer for the Church,” Kelly said.

The convocation featured a variety of workshops starting Friday afternoon and continuing into Saturday. Sessions ranged from the Gospel of Mark, presented by Father

Donald Senior, CP, to Deacon Bob Puhala speaking on the Diaconate today, to Father Richard Fragomeni talking about the new missal and chants for deacons. Of the 43 sessions offered, seven were presented by deacons.

Convocation co-chairman Deacon Dan Welter said there was an effort to increase the number of deacon presenters from the last gathering in 2010 and to feature expert speakers such as Fr. Senior and Sister Laurie Brink, OP, from Catholic Theological Union and others from around the archdiocese.

“I was very, very pleased at the turnout and the response to Matthew Kelly. The highlight of course was the cardinal's gift of the stoles,” Welter said. “The spirit was high. It is one of the highlights of my being a deacon the last 21 years.”

Before Mass on Sunday, there was a panel discussion and community dialogue with the Executive Committee of the Diaconate Council.

Council Chairman Bill Stearns addressed the convocation and outlined the areas of success and ongoing challenges facing the council and the Diaconate Community.

Stearns pointed to the St. Francis Day Dinner and Fundraiser and the convocation as being especially successful, along with the completion of the revised Deacon Policy and Procedures Book, which will be made available online for feedback from the community.

Stearns also talked about the plans to create a new evangelization committee looking at the role of deacons and concluded by assuring the audience regarding deacon transfers that no one would be forced to change parishes.

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



**Phoebe's  
Corner**

*(Continued from page 4)*

in a visible way, reverence and obedience to Him. The second is showing genuine care and respect toward one another. I believe a healthy marriage is our first glimpse of God's love, care and grace. It models the virtues that we hold dear, for better for worst, in sickness and health, richer or poorer...unconditional love and acceptance. We all had parents (guardians), and our first family is the primary teacher of love, faith and commitment. Here is where we long to experience and learn the fruits of the spirit, this strengthens and empowers us to love deeper. Unfortunately, we also learn shame, guilt and despair. These can destroy love of self, which makes it difficult to love someone else. I believe forgiveness, reconciliation, and acceptance are the most important gifts we pass along to our loved ones. Living out these gifts daily with our families makes it easier to extend the same to others. Helping families to understand their value and the tremendous impact they have on society is a challenge. Families must come into the awareness that their ordinary acts of faith, hope, and love transfer beyond the walls of their homes into the lives of everyone.

**Q. How has being a wife of a deacon impacted your life?**

A. Actually, I feel extremely blessed to be married to a man that has committed himself to a life of serving God and the people of God. Yes, it is stressful at times and we are learning to say no as we sometimes over-commit ourselves. The community we serve is very loving and supportive and we are thankful. The work of ministry is never-ending and yes we sacrifice time and treasure, but we are enjoying ourselves -- I feel rewarded."

**INSTITUTE FOR  
DIACONAL FORMATION**

*(Continued from page 5)*

years and blessed with three adult children and two grandchildren.

Roberta Fair earned a Certificate of Studies from the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, in Mundelein, and serves Our Lady of Sorrows as a member of RCIA, Parish Council, Liturgy and Finance Council, Out Reach Committee and coordinator of the clothing program for the homeless. She also is the chair of hospitality for the 2012 Diaconate Convocation, and a volunteer at Zacchaeus House. Roberta was the senior citizens' activity director for a local Parks and Recreations facility for 28 years before retiring in 2006, and was a member of the Core Group for the Diaconate Women in Ministry.

-- Deacon LeRoy T. Gill Jr., '06, is assigned to Holy Angels in Chicago. His current ministries include advocating for effective violence prevention and intervention initiatives, founder of Holy Angels Men's Coalition, chair of the Black Catholic Deacons of Chicago, and a member of the Admissions and Scrutinies Board for the Institute for Diaconal Studies. With his wife, Teresa, he facilitates group workshops and one-on-one sessions with youths and couples on skills and techniques that empower and change lives, equipping them to live out and share Gospel values. Deacon Gill and Teresa have four children and seven grandchildren.

Teresa Gill is a member of the Executive Board for the Office of Black Catholics, Vice-Chair of the Archdiocesan Women's Committee, and works with Holy Angels' Youth Ministry. Teresa completed a master's in Pastoral Studies with an emphasis on family ministry from Dominican University. In addition to working with her husband facilitating workshops throughout the archdiocese, Teresa also ministers with him as FOCCUS

facilitators.

-- Deacon Ronald J. Gronek, '96, is assigned to St. Monica in Chicago; current ministries include assisting at weekday and weekend liturgies, ministering at wakes, prayer services and committals. He also is the chair of the parish's Catholics Come Home program. Deacon Gronek has been married to his wife Connie for 25 years and is blessed with seven daughters. He recently retired after 40 years as a real estate broker.

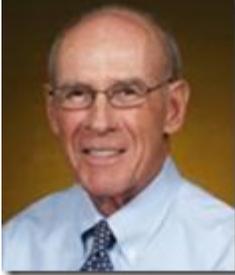
Connie Gronek was born in Abruzzo, Italy and emigrated to the United States with her family in 1968. She has been the coordinator of the Sunday Preschool and Youth Group at Divine Savior Parish in Norridge and serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, weekend retreat coordinator and fund-raising chairperson. She has held various supervisory positions at a packaging company for the past 32 years.

-- Deacon Bill Schultz, '09, is assigned to St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr in Tinley Park. His current parish ministries include spiritual director of: Kingdom Weekend, the Right to Life ministry, marriage ministry and the recovering community. He also serves at Zacchaeus House and as a field advocate for the Marriage Tribunal. Deacon Schultz works as a compliance director for a not for profit. He and his wife Andrea have three married children and five grandchildren.

Andrea Schultz received a Certificate of Studies from the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, and serves on the Right to Life and the Marriage ministries. She also is a second-grade Religious Education catechist and a member of the Women's Club. Outside the parish, Andrea is a field advocate for the Marriage Tribunal in the Archdiocese of Chicago and serves on the Admission and Scrutinies Board for the Institute for Diaconal Studies.

## In Memoriam

### Deacon James L. Kenney



Deacon James L. Kenney, class of 1978, of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff, died Jan. 25. He was 78.

Deacon Kenney ministered at the Church of St. Mary in Lake Forest for 33 years.

"His ministry touched the lives of many people, including the hundreds of children he baptized at St. Mary. When I spoke with Jim last week and thanked him on behalf of the whole parish for his dedicated service, Jim responded: 'It's been a privilege,'" wrote Father Mike McGovern, pastor of St. Mary, on the parish website.

Deacon Richard Hudzik described Deacon Kenney as "a gentle man, but passionate about helping others."

When Hudzik was new to the area, he said Deacon Kenney gave him a tour of "his pride and joy" St. Martin de Porres High School in Waukegan where he served on the board of trustees.

"I also benefitted from Jim's work as animator of the ecumenical group known as the Lake Bluff/Lake Forest Ministerium, which is a monthly gathering of the Christian clergy in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff. Through those meetings, we were able to discuss across denominational lines matters of concern to Christian ministers, for example, how to reclaim Sunday mornings, how to include youth in church activities, how to address economic distresses such as unemployment. Jim and his classmate Joe Krakora, who continues to serve at Church of St. Mary, welcomed me with big hearts

and open hands. Jim will be missed by the parish," Hudzik said.

Deacon Kenney's professional career began at the Ferry Hall School as business manager, followed by positions at Lake Forest Hospital and the Glenbrook High Schools, where he worked 21 years. He was involved in numerous service and community organizations including the Lake Forest - Lake Bluff Running Club, the Knights of Columbus, the American Legion and was past president of the parish council at the Church of St. Mary in Lake Forest, the Rotary Club Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce. He also was an active supporter and alumnus of Lake Forest College and was awarded a Distinguished Service Award by the college in 2009.

He is survived by his son, grandson, seven siblings and his former spouse Constance Dunning.

### Deacon Edward J. Scarbalis Sr.



A lifelong resident of Waukegan, Deacon Edward J. Scarbalis Sr., class of 1986, died Dec. 24. He was 81.

A longtime member of St. Bartholomew Church, he served as an usher, lector and Eucharistic Minister, was the first chairperson of St. Bartholomew's school board and a member of the parish council.

He served in the United States Marine Corps Reserves and was on active duty during the Korean War. He retired after 37 years from Illinois Bell Telephone Co. where he worked as a manager of maintenance engineering.

As a deacon, he took on the parish ministry of care of visiting the shut-ins, became a volunteer hospital chaplain, a field advocate for the Marriage Tribunal and was spiritual adviser for the Black Catholics of Lake County. He was one of the first

deacons involved in performing communion services at the Lake County Jail and became Knights of Columbus Council Deacon and Council Chaplain.

Deacon Scarbalis was a member of the American Legion Post No. 0281, the Knights of Columbus 4th degree Bishop Quarter Assembly, Knights of Columbus 3rd degree Council No. 731, Zion Benton Moose Lodge No. 667, and the Telephone Pioneers.

He was preceded in death by Pearl, his wife of 25 years. He is survived by four children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

## Community news

Your prayers are asked for those who have recently gone to the Lord: Deacon Jim Kenney, '78; Deacon Edward Scarbalis, '86; and Flora Walsh, daughter of Deacon Charles and Jean Walsh, '88.

Among the sick, we commend to your prayers: Janet Tipperreiter; José Vazquez; Bill Reinhart; Tom Coffey; Steven and Millie Moore; Diane Leo; Richard Stojak; Florence Szady; Daniel and Maria Patiño; John Wilkenson; Ida Bohannon; Robert DeFiore; Alfia and Robert Sasseti; Linda O'Donnell; Susan Winblad; Janet Studer, wife of the late Deacon Marvin Studer; '85, Frank DeVita; Rosa Dominguez; Gilberto and Maria Cintron; Antonio and Ernestina Ponce; Nubia Roza; Teresa Ochoa; José Uroza; Jose Marrero; Laura Deters, daughter of Frank and Carolyn Beil; Cheryl Ann Gaca, daughter of Ron and Linda Morowczynski; Cheryl Becker and Robert Brueggemann.

To add a name to our sick and deceased list, please call the Diaconate office at (708) 366-8900.