



DEACON TALK

Council of Deacons Newsletter • Archdiocese of Milwaukee

May 2017

Director's Report

Although slow in coming, Spring is here and new life abounds. The Easter Season invites us to experience the Risen Christ in all His Glory. The Season of Resurrection shines on our Church in special prayers and gatherings including First Communions, Confirmations, and now the heart of the Matrimony celebrations. The Sacraments offer us a true sign of His presence and grace.

I had the good fortune of being invited to participate in the Catholic Leadership 360 program this Spring, along with 19 other parish and archdiocesan leaders. To those of you who were asked to participate as raters for me or others in the program, thank you. This leadership effort is not so much an evaluation, but a true reflection on leadership styles and effectiveness. It leads to a self-evaluation and reflection after which the participant is expected to design a real and measurable development plan.

Part of my development plan is to schedule a one on one session each week with one of our deacons. It is my attempt to discover the gifts of the diaconal call, listen to the stories of joy and struggle, and offer support, prayers, and presence. This was one of my goals when I first began this "job" in December 2015, but often the business of the job distracted from the ministry. The CL 360 plan has "put my feet to the fire" to stay focused on this very important ministry.



There are over 160 deacons in our family and clearly there are some I have not met and many I have not truly engaged. The experience to date has been marvelous and I thank all of you for your willingness to share. I will continue to highlight some of my contacts in my weekly Praise & Prayer notes.

Lastly to all of you, thank you for your ministry and your openness to God's call. Our God, who is the giver of life, sends us as His instruments of life and the Kingdom. Thank you for accepting His invitation and to share your experiences as a reflection of the Risen Lord.

Peace
Mike

President's Report

Greetings Brother Deacons and Wives,

There were many take-aways from the presentations offered by Fr. Baima on Deacon Day. One thing that struck me the most was the value of more than one prospective as we look at diaconal ministry. I personally enjoyed seeing the differences visualized

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in the Eastern Rite Liturgy and appreciating that it was based on a Johannine point of view.

This reminded me of reading about Hans Urs von Balthasar's three basic types of Christian discipleship that correspond to the three apostles who gathered intimately around Jesus: Peter, John, and Paul. He suggested that the mission of every baptized will conform to one of three basic patterns.

Von Balthasar held that the Peter type embodies the role of leader, spokesman, and orderer of charisms. He thought that "suffering and discipline are required precisely because tyranny, the shadow side of the kingly office, is always a danger."

Von Balthasar believed that John's type embodies the mystical, contemplative, liturgical aspect of the church, when the church of Jesus "royally wastes its time." It is the artists, poets, architects, dramatist, liturgists, mystics, and spiritual masters who fulfill the "priestly" office. It too carries a "shadow side in this case superstition or irrational enthusiasm, believing if you will, too much."

Finally, he purported that Paul's type embodies the preacher, proclaimer, and missionary. The prototype of all Christian philosophers, theologians, teachers, adventurers, and missionaries...those would engage the culture around them. This falls under the heading of "prophet...its shadow side is cold rationalism perhaps born from too much exchange with a non-Christian culture, to believe too little."

For Balthasar the "health of the body of Christ depends upon a creative and tensive balance among these three forms of mission. When any one of these forms dominates the other two the essential life of the church is compromised. The work of the church will be carried out most effectively only when these three streams join again in one river."

As deacons, this idea echoes in the formation of our covenants around service to the Word, of the Altar, and of Charity. We are ordained for all three so that any one does not overly dominate the others, diminishing the effectiveness of our ministry and mission as deacons for the church.

It also suggests that beyond our own ministerial balance we should be open to the creative and tensive balance we encounter in all our relationships. Throughout initial and ongoing formation, we are frequently reminded: "Your life is not about you." This, as Bishop Barron confirms in his book *The Strangest Way: Walking the Christian Path*, "is because it is related to the infinite mystery of God, more pointedly it is always about God's missionary purpose...In other words: someone

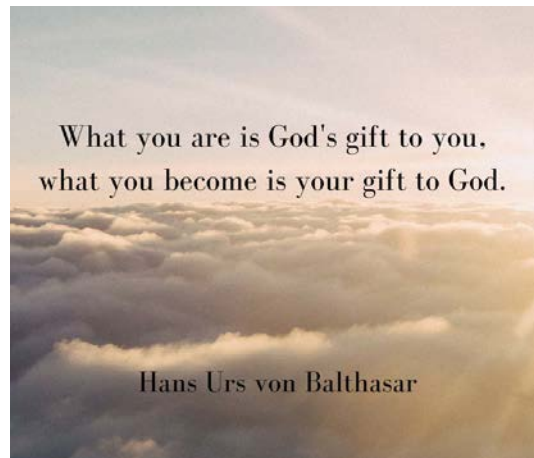
much more powerful than you will overwhelm your physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual capacities, and in the measure that you cooperate with this intervention, you will come to a life you hadn't imagined."

As always with Fraternal Charity,
Deacon Dale Nees

Deacon Personnel Board

The Deacon Personnel Board met on Saturday 2/18/17 at the Cousins Center. In attendance: Dcns. Collins, Gulig, Nosachek and Chmielewski. Excused: Dcns. Campbell, C. Schneider, and Kehrer. The meeting opened with prayer followed by comments from Chair Collins stressing the importance of confidentiality in our proceedings.

The Board then moved into a discussion of the upcoming required 3-year post ordination formation program for our newly ordained. The schedule and plans continue to evolve with input from the deacon community most welcome. The initial session for the class of 2016 is scheduled for Saturday May 20th at the Cousins Center with a focus on "Being/Becoming Deacon." Year two will focus on Liturgical issues, and year three on service in



justice/charity issues. The Board offered full support of the evolving plans.

We then discussed deacon specific issues such as late, expired, or soon to expire covenants. We also discussed at length the use of verbal extensions for covenants when a deacon is encountering pastor changes, new cluster responsibilities, or even discerning a change of assignment. The Board was very supportive of using verbal extensions as a way to insure a strong positive covenant when it is signed. Other deacon specific issues discussed included pending retirements, new assignments, and incardinations.

A serious discussion then followed about the problem of deacon noncompliance with covenant expectations. Specifically, the Director reported that there were a small but worrisome number of deacons who fail to file an annual Formation Report. When no Formation Report is filed, questions arise about diaconal requirements such as: having a spiritual director, attending an annual retreat, participating in 20 hours of continuing education annually, and participating in deacon gatherings (district or general). Noncompliance with these expectations not only reflects poorly on the individual deacon, but weakens the entire diaconate. The Board requested specific names and recent history be presented by the Director at the May meeting. The Board will give serious consideration into ways to moving all the deacons into compliance. Should efforts of the Director continue to be ignored, the Board suggested that sanctions, including a suspension of faculties, could be requested from the Archbishop for continual violators.

The Board also discussed their role in participation of covenant signings for newly ordained and the subsequent covenant renewals for their second year. Every effort will be made to include a Board member at the covenant renewals of the class of 2016.

The meeting ended at 11:30 with closing prayer. The next Personnel Board meeting was scheduled

for Saturday May 27th 9:30-11 AM at the Cousins Center.

Respectfully submitted by Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Deacon Senate

The Deacon Senate convened on March 15th at the Cousins Center with the following deacons in attendance: Bowen, Fogarty, Wiese, Nees, Ebel, Campbell, Jansen, Paczkowski, Maack, and Chmielewski. Excused were: Kempka and Kilkenny.

After opening prayer led by Dc. Fogarty, the first order of business was the Treasurers report and the current status of that office. In Dc. Kempka's absence we received a report of positive funds in the checking account as well as an update on recent expenditures including: a congratulations ad in the Catholic Herald for our new Bishops, the purchase of white miters for the Bishops, and funeral condolences for Dc. Larry Pettey and his wife Lucille, as well as Dc. Mike Cesarec. The discussion then expanded into the general role and responsibilities of the treasurer position. The Senate agreed that a clear delineation and expansion of the position was needed for both financial accountability to the Archdiocese, but even more for planning and clarification of fund usage. The Senate will be asking for a more detailed summary of financial activity from the office which will assist in planning and clarification for event planners. Questions have been raised about expenditures for things like: honorariums, liturgy stipends, facility fees, and catering services. Event planners (Deacon Day, Memorial Mass) are different every year and detailed financial summaries on file with the Senate will allow planners to review trends and history and thus be fair and just in expenditures.

There was also an extended discussion of the Personnel Board report concerning non-compliant deacons. Of specific concern was the failure of far too many deacons to file their annual Formation Report. When no report is filed then assumptions of the deacon having a spiritual director, participating in an annual retreat, participating in continuing

formation, and gathering with his district are usually negative and a source of major concern. The Senate is very much in support of the Personnel Board and its pursuit of deacons who isolate themselves from the community and fail to live up to the promises of their ordination and their Diaconal Covenant.

Other discussion items included:

Formation Report – Dc. Ebel expressed some concern over the lack of inquiries for admission to the class of 2022. He asks that we all continue to encourage men to pray and actively discern their vocational call. Class of 2018 (8 men) and the Aspirancy Class of 2020 (12 men) are progressing well.

Post Ordination Formation – Planning for the 5/20/17 required gathering of the class of 2016 is in full swing. Dc. Dan Kehrer has agreed to be the primary facilitator with Dcn. John Mezydlo and his wife Rita as formal discussion leaders.

Holy Hour for Life- Discussion of the event was centered on when to hold the 2018 prayer, its connection to the Archbishop's Respect Life Mass, and essentially "where do we go from here." The general consensus was to continue leading the prayer but that January may not be the best time of the year. We will await direction from the Archbishop's office and the Office of Human Dignity but need to have a clear direction by September of 2017.

Book of Necrology- Dcn. Bowen brought a proposal from his district to place the Deacon Book of Necrology in a viewable case in the niche of the Cathedral that now displays the Deacon icons. The principals in this discussion, the Deacon Ministers of Care, the Rector of the Cathedral, and the artists of the icons have all agreed on a plan to display the book. The Senate unanimously agreed with the plan and directed Dcn. Bowen to pursue cost estimates and report back to the Senate.

Memorial Mass- The 2017 Memorial Mass is on the calendar for 10/15/17 and will take place at St. Peter Claver, Sheboygan. The Mass will begin at 3 PM with Bishop Sklba presiding followed by dinner at a banquet hall directly across the street from the church. District 7/8/9 are hosting and planning.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8:45. The next Senate meeting is scheduled for 5/17/17.

Respectfully submitted, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Deacon Day 2017



On Saturday 3/11/2017, the deacon family gathered for our annual Deacon Day. The day was planned and hosted by Districts 1-2-3 and our gathering site was St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Racine. Fr. Terry Huebner was a most gracious host as he offered an opening welcome and blessing. A special thank you to Fr. Huebner, Dcns. Dale Nees, Keith Hansen, and Bill Widmar (all of St. Paul's), the musicians and choir, and the facility and support staff at St. Paul's for their hospitality.

Our presenter was Fr. Thomas Baima, vice rector from Mundelein Seminary. His two presentations were quite powerful and offered much food for reflection. His first presentation "Life in the Sanctuary but not of the Sanctuary" called us to reflect on our identity as deacon which is formed by who we are and not what we do. His second presentation on "Cleric in the World" reminded us that we are signs of the Kingdom, first as a witness of faith, then as presence of virtue, and finally as a sign of charity in our service.

Archbishop ListECKI was the main presider at our Liturgy for the day. Fr. Baima concelebrated and they were assisted at the altar by Dcns. Jim Nickel and Jim Zdeb. The Liturgical celebration included honoring the class of 1992 for their 25 years of service. The Archbishop blessed the anniversary

stoles and presented them to Dcn. Richard Govek, Dan Kehrer (Carmella), Gene Kempka (Carla), Al Lazaga (Rocki), and Bill Widmar. Dcns. Bob Wodushek and Howard Wirtz were unable to join us for the day. Congratulations and thank you to all seven.

Archbishop ListECKI closed the Liturgy with a brief presentation on the "State of the Archdiocese" and then accepted multiple questions from the assembly. Once again he showed his support and appreciation for his deacons and our service to the Archdiocese. We closed prayer with a chorus of "Happy Birthday" for the Archbishop.

Lunch followed and we were treated to a bountiful and delicious meal from "The Father's Gathering Service." Extended fellowship continued with the last of the deacons departing by about 2 PM. In all about 100 deacons, wives, and widows gathered to pray, learn, and re connect as a diaconate family.

Again thanks to all in District 1-2-3 who helped plan, lead prayer, set up and clean up, and everything else that was needed for a successful day.

Just a reminder: District 4/5/12 has Deacon Day 2018. See you in Waukesha!!

Mike Chmielewski

Deacon Wives Retreat

The deacons' wives retreat at the Redemptorist retreat center in Oconomowoc began on Friday evening, March 31 and concluded at noon on Sunday, April 1st. It may sound just like a short time, but that time was a wonderful respite from the busy lives we lead. Driving onto the grounds of the retreat center there is a serenity that can be felt. As a deacon's wife, it is also wonderful to be with the other deacon wives who understand what it means to have this role. It is always enjoyable to watch the animal life around the retreat center, sitting in the dining room before breakfast watching the sun come up.

This year's topic was "Saints," presented by Sr. Mary Carrol. The sessions showed the lives of just a few of the saints, and the impact their lives had and continue to have on those who believe. Sr. Mary, through costume and monologue, brought the saints alive. Her handouts included some nice prayers. Sr. Mary was very engaging and knowledgeable and helped bring into focus the lives of the saints she presented.

Ministers of Care

In 2005 a group of Deacon widows and widowers along with two deacon couples formed a group called the Ministers of Care in order to minister to those in our community who are grieving the loss of a spouse. This committee, along with many volunteers, provides support for the grieving and works to keep the widowed connected to the larger

deacon community. This committee works with the approval and support of the Deacon Senate. Once approved by the senate, the committee began meeting on a regular schedule and Jan Telderer (widow of Joe, class of 1984) accepted the role of chairperson. Jan has invested a great deal of time and energy preparing an agenda for each meeting, planning and hosting gatherings of volunteers, working with the music ministers for the memorial mass, and dealing with countless other issues as they come up. After twelve years of leading the Ministry of Care committee, Jan is stepping down. The committee, volunteers and the entire deacon community want to thank Jan for her dedication and guidance. She has done an outstanding job. As for the future, Maryann Ebel has graciously accepted the chairperson role. We know Maryann will continue the strong leadership that Jan has provided and her willingness to move forward with us is greatly appreciated.

Tom Surges

Collars on the Corner

The sign reads: "Collars on the Corner – Free Prayer, Blessings, Listening." She sat staring at the

sign through the window of her jeep. After a while she opened the window and was asked if there was anything we could do. She didn't speak, but her eyes spoke volumes. She was given a piece of paper to write down what she couldn't say. Finally, the tears led to a sigh and the words "I don't think I can ask you to pray for this, the church wouldn't allow it." It turned out she wanted prayer for a family member who was diagnosed with a mental illness and had taken his own life.

Others want prayer but believe they are too dirty, too sinful, to even think of walking through the doors of a church. Many feel they can't ask for prayer if they are not Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, etc. They often feel people of different faiths can never pray together.

Collars on the Corner is a simple idea. It is all about being present where the searching need us, sharing something that costs us nothing, and being witness that God has a bigger plan than any of us. It started in the summer of 2016 right after the unrest in Milwaukee in the Sherman Park Neighborhood. Two deacons, one Episcopalian, the other Roman Catholic, stood on a busy corner for two hours with a cooler full of bottled water and took spoken or written prayer requests from anyone who asked. They also reached out a bit, taking bottles to cars stopped at the traffic light. The experience was so spirit filled that one Saturday led to many. Then as the weather deteriorated, other "corners" were considered.

Now there are "Collars on the Corner" activities in three southeastern Wisconsin communities, eight other states, and Kenya (the power of the internet). The power of prayer through Collars can be reached in various laundromats, community centers and churches and is now heading back on the streets. There are now over 20 people who join in praying for those who simply ask us to.

Our communities need to see us in plain sight... outside the church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. They need to see us together and being the example.

Fear, despair and untruth are the ways we are divided. Prayer, faith and community are the way to overcome them. If you want more information or would like to join us, feel free to contact Episcopal

Deacon Kevin Stewart at Stewart@diomil.org or Roman Catholic Deacon Jim Banach at dcnjimbanach@stgregsmil.org. You may also experience the story of Collars on the Corner by visiting our Facebook page.

Give it a chance, step outside, be where the people are most in need and discover just how holy your calling, your prayer and your time can be.

Jim Banach and Kevin Stewart

Rest in Peace

Deacon Lawrence C. Petty died on February 16, 2017. Larry Petty was born in Wausaukee, WI. on 9/3/1918. He graduated from Waukesha High in 1938. He entered the US Army in 1941 serving his country through World War II, being honorably



discharged as a Corporal in November 1945. Larry's secular work included over 21 years in the sales department of National Adv. from which he retired in 1975.

In 1941 Larry married Dorothy (Topitch) who preceded him in death. He married Lucille (Meier) in 1974. Lucille died on 1/6/17 while they were both residing at Linden Grove Waukesha. Larry will be sadly missed by his son Richard (Deborah) of Largo, FL, step daughter Jean (Harry) Monahan of Vienna, VA, and step daughter in law Barbara Golemgenske of Madison, WI. Larry is the proud grandfather of 4 and great grandfather of 1.

Larry began his diaconate formation in 1974 at St. Francis Seminary. He was ordained a Permanent Deacon on 12/26/1975 (first class) by Archbishop William Cousins. Larry was assigned to St. Mary Parish, Waukesha, where he served until his formal

retirement on 7/1/86. Even in retirement, Larry served the St. Mary's community in many ways as long as his health allowed. His ministry included serving at the altar but his true passion was caring for the sick. He was a Certified Chaplain and also spent time as the official Archdiocesan liaison between the Chaplain Certification Program and the Permanent Deacons.

Funeral services for both Larry and Lucille were held on Friday 2/24/17 at St. Mary's Parish. Visitation began at 3 PM and included a visit and prayer by Archbishop ListECKI. The Funeral Mass began at 5 PM with St. Mary's pastor Fr. Howard Haase presiding, Fr. Bill Stanfield and Fr. Neil Zinthefer as concelebrants and Dcn. Mike Chmielewski assisting at the altar. There were 8 deacons and 1 wife at the prayer who escorted Larry's casket and Lucille's urn in and out of church.

Fr. Haase reflected on the Beatitude Gospel from Matthew and stressed how much God had accomplished thru Larry and Lucille. Fr. Howard expressed much gratitude and appreciation for all the service lived by Larry and Lucille to family, country, and Church. Dcn. Chmielewski offered the final commendation and the appreciation of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Full military honors followed with the deacon family then escorting Larry and Lucille to a waiting hearse. Interment took place at a later time.

Please continue to keep the Pettey family in your prayer. May they rest in peace.

Rest in Peace

Deacon Carlos Acosta was born 7/18/1936 in Carlsbad, NM. He graduated from Mount St. Francis Seminary High School in 1958 and then spent some time in college at both Indiana State and the University of Minnesota. The majority of his secular



work found him employed at Sears on Milwaukee's Southside. When Sears began to downsize, he retired and then moved onto working in the security department of Aurora Health Care.

Carlos married his beloved Iris ("Lucy") on 9/14/68. Together they have three children: Elizabeth (Carl) Pearson, Carl (Lynn), and the late Margie. They also have 4 grandchildren: Savanna and Lily Pearson, and Victor and Anthony Acosta.

Carlos began his diaconate formation in 1974 at St. Francis Seminary. He was ordained a Permanent Deacon on 12/26/1975 (first class) by Archbishop William E. Cousins. His first assignment was to serve at his home parish Our Lady of Guadalupe. He served and ministered in covenanted service for 23 years and was assigned to a number of different parishes including: St. Matthew, St. Wenceslaus, and St. Lawrence, all on Milwaukee's Southside. In addition to his service at the altar at the parishes, Carlos was an active member of the St. Vincent DePaul Society. However, his true passion was care for the sick, both at home and in the hospital. Carlos took special chaplain training to enhance his ministry in the hospital.

Visitation for Deacon Carlos was held on Tuesday May 9, 2017 beginning at 9 AM at Our Lady of Guadalupe (Holy Trinity) Parish located at 613 S. 4th St., Milwaukee. At 10 AM a bi-lingual funeral service led by Dcns. Chmielewski and Benavente was to be held. The Parish had indicated that no priest was available for a Funeral Mass. Archbishop ListECKI came to the Church around 9:15 to pray for Dcn. Acosta and offer his support and appreciation to the family. When told that no priest was available for a funeral Liturgy, the Archbishop proclaimed that "there is a priest now!" He retrieved his vestments from the car and led the family and supporters in the Mass of Christian Burial. He was assisted by Dcns. Chmielewski and Benavente, who preached.

The prayer offered a beautiful picture of Dcn. Carlos as a man of service, dedication, and love. He was a man committed to God, family, Church, and his community. Dcns. Kehrer, H. Reyes, and Hunt

vested for the Mass and served as the deacon honor guard for Dcn. Carlos. Dcn. Benavente accompanied the family to St. Adalbert Cemetery for the final committal. Please keep Dcn. Carlos and his family in your prayers.

May he rest in the Peace of Christ!

Know Your Deacons

St. Benjamin, Deacon, lived in Persia (modern day Iran) in the 5th century. Christians had enjoyed 12 years of peace in Persia when in 420 an overzealous local Bishop, Abdas, indiscreetly burned down the Temple of Fire which was the great prayer sanctuary of the Persians. The King demanded that Abdas rebuild the Temple under the threat of persecution. Abdas refused and was promptly arrested and executed. The King and eventually his son proceeded with 40 years of severe persecution of local Christians.

Benjamin was imprisoned for a year for his faith but the Eastern Church arranged for his release with the promise that Benjamin would stop preaching. After his release, Benjamin quickly resumed his preaching which prompted him to be arrested and severely tortured. Benjamin refused to be silent professing to be a minister of the Gospel with a duty to proclaim the Word. Benjamin was martyred when a spiked stake was thrust into his bowels. He died around 424 and his feast is celebrated on March 31.

Prayer Requests

Deacon Tony Martino`84
Deacon Francisco Blas`02 and wife Florencia
Deacon Chuck Kustner`75 and wife Martha
Andrea Monzel, wife of late Dcn. Paul
Deacon John D'Alessio`98 and wife Antoinette
Betty Rooney, wife of Dcn. Mike`88
Deacon Roberto Fuentes`02 and wife Lorenz
Deacon Jay Wittak`05 and wife Susan
Deacon Dick Govek`92 and wife Dorothy

Deacon Ed Weber`81 and wife Sue
Deacon Baleriano Gonzalez `84
Lee Cesarec wife of late Dcn. Mike
Theresa Mensah, wife of the late Dcn. Tony`83
Jack Matz, father of Sue Small Hoover (Dcn. Jim)
Deacon Bob Wodushek `92 and wife Kathy
Deacon Ron Schneider `96
Susan Sommers, wife of Dcn. David`00
Deacon Gene Kempka `92 and wife Carla
Amy Starke, wife of Dcn. Jim `16
Jennie Dziennik, widow of Dc. John`94
Fr. Tim Regan, son of Dc. Sy`75
Iris Acosta, wife of late Dcn. Carlos
Dcn. Scott Wiese`12

ALSO THE RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES:

Lucille Pettey, wife of Dcn. Larry`75, 1/6/17
Deacon Larry Pettey`75, 2/16/17
Carl Ebel, father of Dcn. John`96, 3/1/17
Joe Schneider, grandson of Dcn. Chuck`14, 3/1/17
Kathy Darnell, widow of Dc. Carl`94, 4/17/17
Deacon Carlos Acosta`75, 5/5/17

Dates to Remember

Post Ordination Formation 5/20/17, Cousins Center 8 AM – 3 PM

Roman/Episcopal Gathering 6/3/17, St. Mary Visitation, Elm Grove: 8 AM -Noon

Memorial Mass 2017 October 15, 2017, St. Peter Claver, Sheboygan, 3 PM, Bishop Sklba presiding

Dcn. Retreat 2017 11/2-11/5/2017, Redemptorist, Director Fr. Jerry Herda, Vicar for Clergy

Deacon Day 2018 Date TBD, planning by Districts 4/5/12

Deacon Wives Retreat 2018: April 26-29, 2018, Siena Center

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