



Called To Serve

The Journey to Diaconal Ordination

A Newsletter by the
Permanent Deacon
Formation Class
of 2011
Volume 3

April 2008

“Jesus wasn’t pretending on the Cross”:

Professor Maureen Crossan offers Day of Recollection

William G. Batz, Ph.D.

Days of Recollection and special workshops form an integral part of formation for Candidates for Diaconal Ordination. Twice each term the candidates, and occasionally their spouses, spend a Saturday at St. Paul Seminary, joined in prayer and reflection on critical aspects of ministry. Last November Maureen Crossan, Ph.D., professor at Carlow University, offered a day of recollection on the topic of Commitment.

“Nowadays it is a struggle to remain anything,” noted Dr. Crossan. Our culture resists the concept that any commitment we make is “done, once and for all.” When suffering challenges our commitment, and we are tested to remain faithful to the basic promises we make in our lives, the individualistic ethos of modern society encourages us to look principally to our own

self-gratification. It offers up a self-serving rationale to jettison commitments that are no longer without struggle. Obviously we see this pattern in the tragic level of divorce in the United States. Covenant vows are disavowed when some discover how much self-sacrifice is required in matrimony.

Likewise in ministry, Dr. Crossan noted, it is essential for an ordained person to embrace a profound commitment to “being the Presence of God in the World,” especially when that commitment entails struggle and suffering. “Jesus wasn’t pretending on the Cross,” she observed. Indeed, the God of the Incarnation is the God of Being There – a God of passion who is not passive, but who acts in the world and joins us in suffering. We must have the mind of Christ Incarnate and Cru-

ciated. We must thank God for counting us worthy to stand in His Presence in the chaos of the world and serve Him in struggle.

Dr. Crossan concluded her day of reflections with a contrast between the Prodigal Son and Jesus the Son in the Philippians Canticle (Phil. 2:4). The Prodigal Son grasped at his inheritance and the allurements of this world, and in so doing, lost his sonship, Dr. Crossan observed. By contrast, Jesus did not deem quality with God something to be grasped at. Instead, he let everything go, and became Lord! True and permanent commitment involves a willingness to let go of self in order to participate in the salvific ministry and struggle of Christ.



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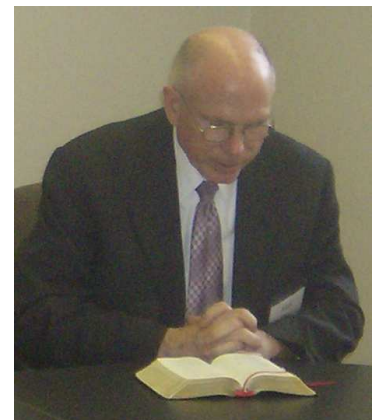
Lessons & Carols: A Christmas Celebration

Edwin P. Christman, Ph.D.

On January 12, 2008, the deacon candidates and their families participated in the first Christmas Service of “Lessons and Carols” at St. Paul Seminary’s O’Connor Hall. The celebration brought an end to the Christmas Season by reflecting on the story of the birth of the Messiah

through Biblical readings, musical performances, and the singing of familiar carols and hymns. Sr. Patricia Rogan, the deacon candidates and their families participated in the songs, readings, and prayers. Moreover, the children were invited to light candles between the hymns and readings.

After the celebration, the ceremony concluded with a reception for the candidates at O’Connor Hall. The next formal event will be our Annual Retreat, which will be held over the weekend of June 6, 2008.





A Note from the Director: *FORMATION FOR SERVICE*

Rev. James A. Wehner, S.T.D. Director, Diaconate Program

It is hard to believe that our deacon candidates are already in their second year of formation. This Summer the candidates will be serving primarily in institutions within our diocese to learn more about ministry that involves people who experience life in many different and varying ways. The Ministry of Reader will be conferred by Bishop Zubik on September 14 at Saint Anne Parish, Castle Shannon, beginning at 3:00 p.m. The conferral of this ministry reflects the intimacy a deacon candidate

has with the Word of God. The deacon is to not only proclaim God's Word but to live every aspect of that Word. The conferral of this ministry represents the Church's confidence that deacon candidates are be-

ing formed to be the heralds of Christ's Gospel. As the 2011 class continues in their formation, the Office for the Diaconate is currently beginning to form a class for 2013. May the Lord continue to bless all of these men who are responding so generously to the Church's call for diaconal ministry. Bishop Zubik recently announced that he will appoint a new director to the Office for the Diaconate. It has been a privilege working with all of our deacon candidates and I will always treasure the six years in which I have been able to

learn much about my own priesthood because of the witness of these fine men.



Saint Stephen— One of the first seven deacons of the Church.

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Candidates Sharpen Their Communication Skills

Andrew J. White

The Deacon Candidates had an opportunity to participate in a workshop titled "Principles and Guidelines of Pastoral Communications" presented by Reverend Joseph Mele. Father Mele led discussions on various topics including: preaching, evangelization, conversion, Acclamation of the Good News as well as interpersonal, organizational, religious institutional and catholic media communications. The informative workshop focused on the skills candidates would need to communicate effectively in their new roles as ordained clergy.

Father Mele mentioned that the theology of pastoral communications is rooted in Word and Liturgy. That every communication in ministry whether counseling, teaching faith formation or conducting parish meetings should flow from the Word of God and should lead us to the Liturgy.

He reminded candidates that pastoral communicators are sensitive, sympathetic, non-judgmental and patient in addition to being good listeners.

Candidates were able to apply all they had learned in the afternoon session. Each candidate was given a pastoral situation in which they were to respond either in a one on one meeting, a reflection to a small gathering, or a homily to a grieving family. Candidates were critiqued by members of their group. A few weeks after the workshop candidates received, from the Diaconate office, their compiled written critiques. Deacon Candidates are required to participate in two workshops each year during their formation.



Fall 2007 Term Provides Scintillating Material

Jeffrey J. Ludwikowski

In September of 2007, all 47 Deacon Candidates returned to classes after spending the summer on our parish assignments and allowing our minds to lie fallow. It was a bit of a shock for some, including this writer, to have to gear up mentally in order to take on classes in Fundamental Theology, Christology and Christian Anthropology. However as Mick Babcock said, it was "good to get back to normal Thursdays." Indeed, the fellowship and sharing among the candidates, paired with the terrific presentations on our faith have made Thursday evenings an event that most of the candidates look forward to, and this experience is the "norm" for us now. Fall 2007 was no exception.

Father Bober, Father Caridi, and Father Almada all made it a pleasure for us to make our respective treks to St. Paul Seminary each Thursday evening. We started the term with Fr. Bober's 5 week presentation on Fundamental Theology, delving into deep questions about who we are, who God is, and the nature of reason. Certainly none of us will ever be able to forget the distinction between exegesis and eisegesis or the differences in diachronic and synchronic methods of biblical interpretation. It was also a treat to finally figure out what Fr. Wehner was talking about when he repeatedly referred to the relevant "hermeneutics."

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Faith & Love: A Wife's Perspective

Anne Kisak

A few weeks ago, one of my husbands classmates in the current Deaconate program asked if I would write about what it's like to be a deacon candidates wife. My initial response was admittedly "Why me? Surely there must be someone more qualified to do this." As I gave it more thought, I realized this is exactly what the current candidates and future aspirants, wives, and families may have or are experiencing as they go through the process.

The experience of each person and family is truly unique. We are a diverse group of people from all walks of life. The impact of your spouse being in the deaconate program continues to be felt, with each year bringing new challenges and opportunities for us as individuals and for our families.

During the prophetic period, the classes and retreats I attended helped me to fully understand what it means for Steve to potentially be a deacon in the Catholic Church, what the deacons role is, and it has helped form my vision of how best to support my husband now and in the future. This period firmly solidified our entire families decision to support Steve is this process.

As an Aspirant, Steve's classes continued. While wives did not attend any classes, the retreat and workshop allowed us to get to know fellow classmates and wives better. The summer work assignment at our parish helped Steve to understand how parish operations run and it allowed our family to better understand what the family life of a deacon may be like – unpredictable in nature.

This year, while again only Candidates attend classes, the fall workshop was again a wonderful opportunity to gather together and get to know the each other. This summer, I look forward to the weekend retreat and again all candidates will again have work assignment that further helps them to grow and better understand the many ways the church reaches out to individuals and communities.

The Diocese, Father Wehner, and Sister Pat have not only done a wonderful job of providing a great curriculum and teachers for the candidates but they continue to provide opportunities for the wives to understand the program and for families to get to know each other. The well planned out schedule and regularity of classes are truly a godsend and help us to juggle our already busy lives. Retreats and workshops provide us with the opportunity to learn, grow, and understand the deaconate program and develop lasting relationships with other candidates and wives. And the summer assignments provide us a chance to glimpse of what life might be like, helping us adapt to the unpredictable nature of the deacons role.

As the program evolves, wives and families continue in their supportive roles and candidates continue to learn through classwork and assignments about the church and it's teachings. The deaconate program has given all of our families a unique opportunity to consider and learn about what is truly important in life - faith and love.

Calendar of Events:

June - August	Summer pastoral assignments for all Deacon Candidates
June 6 - June 8	Deacon Candidate Retreat Villa Maria Education & Spirituality Center
July 19	Deacon Family Picnic Details to be Announced!
September 14	Ministry of Reader Celebrated at Saint Anne Parish - Castle Shannon 3:00 p.m.

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Fall 2007 Term Provides Scintillating Material

Next, we had the pleasure of Father Almade's company and his stimulating discussion style of presentation on Christian Anthropology. It seems that Socrates is not the only teacher who has mastered the art of the dialectic method. It also seems the "golden mean" applies equally well to Socratic theories as it does to Pre and Post Vatican II aspects of our church and faith.

Perhaps the most exciting part of Father Almade's class was his agreement to forego a final exam and allow the candidates to complete a "take-home" essay on one of various topics. At least we thought so until we confronted his grading style (fair but firm).

Finally, Father Caridi presented the question, "Who do we say Jesus is?" In a truly unique style, our first task was to write a short essay on how we would describe Jesus to a person with little or no knowledge of our faith. We then undertook the task of examining high and low Christology, the various heresies that

arose in the early church regarding the person of Jesus, the teaching of the church councils that corrected those heresies and the ultimate resolution of that "hypostatic union" that Father Wehner kept talking about. Thanks for clearing that up Father Mike. We also appreciated the final essay to be completed during class in lieu of a final exam.

All in all, the fall term provided tremendous learning opportunities for all of the candidates as we continue to be formed into the men Christ calls us to be.



Permanent Deacon Formation Class of 2011

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Michael J. Babcock | (St. Albert the Great) |
| Joseph N. Basko | (St. Frances Cabrini) |
| William G. Batz, Ph.D. | (St. Louise de Marillac) |
| Ronald W. Belski | (St. Mary of the Assumption) |
| Mark S. Bibro | (St. Pius X) |
| John J. Carran | (Christ the King) |
| William H. Carver | (St. Ferdinand) |
| Edwin P. Christmann, Ph.D. | (St. Peter) |
| Gary L. Comer | (St. Athanasius) |
| Gerard A. Como | (St. Patrick) |
| Ross F. Dacal | (St. Bonaventure) |
| Harry J. DeNome | (Christ the Divine Teacher) |
| Frederick N. Eckhardt | (St. Bernard) |
| Richard T. Fitzpatrick | (Our Lady of the Angels) |
| Albert E. Heiles, Jr. | (St. Alphonsus) |
| Jeffrey A. Hirst | (Immaculate Conception) |
| Clifford M. Homer | (St. Catherine of Sweden) |
| Robert A. Jancart, M.D. | (St. Margaret Mary) |
| Stephen J. Kisak | (St. Sebastian) |
| Richard C. Kleifgen | (St. Anne) |
| Keith G. Kondrich | (Word of God) |
| Robert E. Koslosky | (St. Robert Bellarmine) |
| Thomas E. Krulikowski | (St. Louise de Marillac) |
| Kevin L. Lander | (St. Margaret of Scotland) |
| Richard A. Longo | (Resurrection) |
| Thomas A. Lopus | (Ss. John & Paul) |
| Jeffrey J. Ludwikowski | (St. Sebastian) |
| James Mackin | (Ss. Simon & Jude) |
| Robert M. Marshall | (St. Kilian) |
| Jack Miller | (Incarnation of the Lord) |
| Thomas B. Mills | (St. Valentine) |
| Anton V. Mobley | (Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal) |
| Gary Molitor | (St. Richard) |
| Daniel E. Nizan | (St. Sylvester) |
| Paul J. Ostermann | (Word of God) |
| William R. Palamara, Jr. | (St. Athanasius) |
| Alex J. Poroda, II | (St. Anthony) |
| John E. Ragan | (St. Michael) |
| Herbert E. Riley, Jr. | (St. Colman) |
| Robert J. Stein | (St. Anne) |
| Kevin Thompson | (St. Joseph) |
| Richard M. Tucek | (St. Bernadette) |
| Joseph R. Vannucci | (St. John the Baptist) |
| Charles J. Vukotich | (St. Winifred) |
| James T. Weiland | (Our Lady of Peace) |
| Andrew J. White | (St. Sylvester) |
| Gary J. Yanniello, D.M.D. | (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton) |

