

February
2012

IDS Journal



INSTITUTE FOR
DIACONAL STUDIES

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DEACON BOB PUHALA
DIRECTOR

I remember a conversation with my late mom while she was battling Parkinson's in her early 70s. She told me her memory was failing at the strangest times. She was forgetting people's names though they were friends for decades. Many of her "famous" homemade recipes were long wiped from her mind. Sometimes she couldn't even remember my name or the date of my birthday, she said. But then she smiled and added, "But there's an Irish part of me that still works - I do remember all the grudges!" It was a funny line. But it continues to lead me into deeper reflection about how I also hold on to grudges and fail to forgive - and I don't have anything to blame that on but myself. Holding on to grudges only builds up walls of separation. We become imprisoned by our own emotions. Those walls don't only keep people out; those walls are keep us penned in! Even more insidious, those walls can prevent God's abundant blessings from pouring into our lives because part of our heart is clouded with bitterness instead of filled with His love. We've all had difficult experiences. We've all had people hurt us, sometimes deeply. Perhaps there are some grudges we've held on to, like some kind of hideous battle souvenirs, for years. Let them go! Get that bitterness out of your life. It's the only way you can break out of that prison you've built for yourself - and run back into the freedom of God's loving arms.

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A new name

Continuing excellence

Opportunities for the ordained

The Institute for Diaconal Studies extends a warm invitation to ordained deacons - check out page 10 for exciting opportunities for continued growth.

IDS is in the process of developing an...

Alumni Association

Contact
Deacon Bob Puhala at
847-837-4564

Feature

Prison Ministry and the deacon: Part I

Deacon Bill Gibbons (2011)



Deacon Gibbons serves at St. Patrick Church in Wadsworth and as a chaplain at the Lake County jail in Waukegan, Illinois. He schedules over thirty lay volunteers, deacons and priests for Sunday worship services and serves as an advocate for the inmates on a variety of issues. Deacon Bill and his wife Jean have two daughters, Erin and Megan.

WHEN I WAS ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IDS Journal with a feature on ministering to the incarcerated and to those responsible for their care, I wanted to provide something more than just an article on the work - more than just a profile of the ministry.

While any treatment of the subject would provide a glimpse into the actual work that I share with dozens of lay volunteers and clergy at the Lake County Jail in Waukegan, I wanted to offer it in a way that might provide some additional value - especially to aspirants and candidates - as they discern their prospective roles as ordained ministers. I wanted to offer it as an example of how any *single* ministry can encompass the three-fold ministry of the deacon - Word, Liturgy and Charity - if we remain open to the possibility.

Our classes and formation sessions may focus on one aspect at a time and our internships are structured to take deep dives into each facet of ministry, but the ultimate outcome of the formation journey is to allow the man to integrate those individual experiences and allow his unique diaconal identity to emerge. The classes and sessions and study require work; integration requires surrender.

It took me a several years of prayerful discernment, but I finally came to a better understanding of how these experiences contributed to my formation, why I was drawn into this ministry and - through surrender - how to integrate those findings into my identity as a deacon.

With this as an introduction, in the next issue I'll provide some specifics on how serving the inmates, officers and staff of Lake County Jail incorporates the role of evangelist and teacher in service to the Word; the role of sanctifier by bringing God's grace through liturgy into a place that most folks would choose to avoid; the role of witness and guide - in pastoral visits and in serving as an advocate - in service to charity and justice. In a final installment, I'll offer an invitation.

One of the consistent anthems that we hear during formation is the importance of striking a balance between tending to our family, our work and our call to ministry. In anticipation of serving as an ordained minister of the Church, we're also encouraged to embrace the balance in our attention to the three-fold ministry of the deacon.

I'll invite you to reflect on the ministries in which you have a share and - perhaps in ways that may not be readily apparent - to look for the ways that the three-fold ministry of the deacon is already present. We may find that, to strike the balance in our ministry, it may not take more work - but more surrender.



**Mystic
Monk “E”**

**Pearls of wisdom on
effective preaching ...**

*It is only over time
that God’s word works
wonders.*

And keep in mind when
preparing a homily –

*What are the true
human issues?*

Check it out

Deacon at Mass (PDF)
on our website INFO LINKS –
www.usml.edu
Click *Ministry Formation*,
click *Deacon Formation*

Monthly Minder – February

...from the Ordo and Lectionary (B)

Sunday, February 5

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Job 7: 1-4, 6-7 *I am filled with sorrows all day long*
- 1 Corinthians 9: 16-19, 22-23 *Punishment will come to me if I do not preach the gospel*
- Mark 1: 29-39 *He cured many who suffered from diseases of one kind or another*

More homily hints: Job’s cry of hopelessness stands in marked contrast to the hope of those who put their trust in Jesus, who “heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.” Such are the blessings of the good news.

Sunday, February 12

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46 *As long as he is unclean, he must live alone, outside the camp*
- 1 Corinthians 10: 31 - 11: 1 *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ*
- Mark 1: 40-45 *He sent the leper from him and he was cured*

More homily hints: Jesus manifests the powerful, healing love of God by curing the leper who was forced to live under severe restrictions by legislation. He turned to Jesus in his need and was filled with joy. We are called to imitate the healing and compassionate Jesus.

Sunday, February 19

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18 *You must love your neighbor as yourself*
- 1 Corinthians 3: 16-23 *All things are yours, but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God*
- Matthew 5: 38-48 *Love your enemies*

More homily hints: In our repentance, the Lord remembers not our offenses. God, who is forever faithful, has sent us his Son. He is the sign of God’s never ending healing love and forgiveness.

Ash Wednesday – February 22

Sunday, February 26

First Sunday of Lent

- Genesis 9: 8-15
- 1 Peter 3: 18-22
- Mark 1: 12-15

*Prayer
Fasting
Almsgiving*

For Supportive Pastors
... Deo Gratias

Discerning
 Sponsoring
 Supporting
 Supervising
 Evaluating
 Endorsing
 Welcoming

Supporting:

The pastor provides spiritual and emotional support for a candidate and his wife (if married) and parish financial assistance (tuition).

Amen!

For Supportive Wives
... Deo Gratias

The INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES (IDS) provides opportunities for growth, enrichment and information needed by wives to make a supportive decision – to ascertain her compatibility with her husband’s diaconal vocation and eventual ministry, and to offer continued formation so that she may give her informed consent to her husband’s participation.

Women of Witness

“When we slow down and allow for quiet spaces, there are fewer barriers between us and the Holy One. In stillness, we come face to face with what we might otherwise miss or avoid. As we give ourselves to periods of silence and solitude, we uncover more of the truth that guides our life and are able to relish the goodness of the Beloved dwelling within the beauty of our Soul.”

Excerpt from “Prayer,” Copyright 2007 by Joyce Rupp – fundamental reading for the *Women of Witness* Series for the wives of candidates in IDS.

Prayer

“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”

Psalm 95: 6-7

For our consideration: As permanent deacons, how do we encourage parish members to get more involved in ministry and evangelization? Are we motivators and enablers who recognize diverse gifts or do we rely on the few?

God of Zion and Babylon, of Eden and of this place where we live now: Even in Lent, how little we know of weeping. Even in Lent, how little we know of homelessness. For these 40 days, be the song we long to sing. Give us time to study, ponder and pray....and remember how your song is sung with deeds of charity. Bring us home to our Easter, to the New Jerusalem. For Jesus Christ is Lord forever and ever. Amen.



Lent



In the cycle of weekday readings (and in the Divine Office), Lent falls into two parts. The first part, including the “pre-Lent” of Ash Wednesday and the rest of that week, runs through to Saturday of Week 3. In these three and a half weeks, the Gospel texts are taken from the Synoptics and the Old Testament readings are chosen accordingly. The message running throughout is a call to a life of Gospel conversion. The pericopes speak of beginning anew, of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; of conversion; of mutual conversion; of mutual forgiveness; of hardness of heart; of love of enemies; of absolute claims of justice and love over ritual and cult; of the call to holiness. (Occasionally, what appears to be salvation history narrative is interspersed among these moral texts – a story like the call of Naaman or the workers in the vineyard, for example – but, in this context they are meant to be read as a call to conversion rather than referring to Christ or to the Easter mysteries).

The readings for the second half of Lent are taken from the Gospel of John, beginning on the Monday of the fourth week of Lent at 4:43 and going through, omitting passages read on Sundays and during Easter, to chapter 13. It is clear that these readings from John do not constitute a “crash course” in the life of Jesus, so much as a presentation of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, of whom John says that all who believe in him will have eternal life. Christ is presented as the healer and life-giver, as the one who gives life through his confrontation with death and gathers into one the scattered children of God.

How do these two sections of the lectionary fit together and what can they tell us about the spirit of Lent? The shift from the “ethical” to the “Christological” is not accident. The purpose of the first part of Lent is to bring us to compunction. “Compunction” is etymologically related to the verb “to puncture” and suggests the deflation of our inflated egos, a challenge to any self-deceit about the quality of our lives as disciples of Jesus. By hitting us again and again with demands which we not only fail to obey, but which we come to recognize as being quite beyond us, the Gospel passages are meant to trouble us, to confront our illusions about ourselves. “Remember, you are dust...” From this perspective, Lenten penance may be more effective if we fail in our resolutions than if we succeed, for its purpose is not to confirm us in our sense of virtue but to bring home to us our radical need of salvation.

*christological
soteriological*

It is in answer to this profound awareness of need that the lectionary shifts from the Synoptics to John, from the demands of discipleship to the person of Jesus. John presents Jesus as the Savior, but Jesus can only save those who know their need for salvation. Confronted with our sickness and powerlessness, we pray for our salvation.

Excerpt from “The Spirit of Lent,” Mark Searle, in *Assembly*, Volume 8:3
Copyright Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, Notre Dame, IN

Four Dimensions of Formation

...from the *National Directory* (USCCB, 2005)

For celibate candidates, to live love means offering the totality of one's being, of one's energies and readiness, to Christ and the Church. It is a demanding vocation, which must take into account the inclinations of affectivity and the pressures of instinct and which therefore requires renunciation, vigilance, prayer and fidelity to a precise rule of life.

Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons
(Vatican) No. 68.

HUMAN

108. **Four aspects of human maturity:** The Congregation for Catholic Education's *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* highlights four aspects of human maturity that must be considered when developing formation programs for deacons. These include: (1) formation in the human virtues, (2) the capacity to relate to others, (3) affective maturity (including psychosexual maturity and health), and (4) training in freedom, which "includes the education of the moral conscience."

SPIRITUAL

112. **A mature spirituality in imitation of Jesus:** Configured sacramentally to Christ the Servant, a deacon's spirituality must be grounded in the attitudes of Christ. These include "simplicity of heart, total giving of self and disinterest for self, humble and helpful love for the brothers and sisters, especially the poorest, the suffering and the most needy, the choice of a lifestyle of sharing and poverty." This diaconal spirituality is nourished by the Eucharist, which, "not by chance, characterizes the ministry of the deacon."

INTELLECTUAL

120. **The intellectual content should be oriented toward a pastoral context:** The intellectual content should be organized, presented, and directed fundamentally to prepare participants for the pastoral context of service. It should provide the participant with the knowledge, skills, and appreciation of the faith that he needs to effectively fulfill his ministry of word, liturgy, and charity. It should, therefore, be authentic and complete.

PASTORAL

128. **Pastoral formation content:** Pastoral formation should take into account that those preparing for the diaconate have already been involved in the mission of the Church.In addition to identifying and developing the gifts already at work, the pastoral dimension of formation should aim at helping the participant to discover talents, perhaps unrecognized, and to develop the skills necessary for exercising the three-fold diaconal ministry. A participant needs to demonstrate a genuine confidence in his own ability – a realistic sense of achieving the knowledge and skills required for an effective diaconal ministry – and a strong desire to serve in a broad range of ministerial circumstances.

VATICAN – Basic Norms

Basic Norms for the Formation of Deacons (Vatican, 1998)

Chapter 3 The Spirituality of the Deacon

The relations of Holy Orders

49. It must not be forgotten that the object of Christ's diaconia is mankind. Every human being carries the traces of sin but is called to communion with God. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that all who believe in Him might not die but have eternal life" (*John* 3: 16). It was for this plan of love, that Christ became a slave and took human flesh. The Church continues to be the sign and instrument of that diaconia in history.

In virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders deacons are at the service of their brothers and sisters needing of salvation. As mankind can see the fullness of the Father's love by which they are saved in the words and deeds of Christ the Servant, so too this same charity must be apparent in the life of the deacon. Growth in imitation of Christ's love for mankind – which surpasses all ideologies – is thus an essential component of the spiritual life of every deacon.

A "natural inclination of service to the hierarchy and to the Christian community" is required of those who seek admission to the diaconate. This should not be understood "in the sense of a simple spontaneity of natural disposition...it is rather an indication of nature inspired by grace, with a spirit of service that conforms human behavior to Christ's. The sacrament of the diaconate develops this inclination: it makes the subject to share more closely in Christ's spirit of service and imbues the will with a special grace so that in all his actions he will be motivated by a *new inclination* to serve his brothers and sisters".

The eternal Son of the Father "emptied himself assuming the form of a slave" (*Phil* 2:7) and lived this condition in obedience to the Father (*John* 4: 34) and in humble service to the brethren (*John* 13: 14-15). (47)

For deacons the call to holiness means "following Jesus by an attitude of humble service which finds expression not only in works of charity but also in imbuing and forming thoughts and actions."

Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons, page 112, No. 45.

United States Catholic Conference, Washington, DC, 1998

John Paul II, Catechesis at the General Audience of 20 October 1993, n. 2: *Insegnamenti*, XVI, 2 (1993), p. 1054.

USCCB - National Directory

The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (USCCB 2005)

Chapter 2

The relationships of the deacon

Relationship with Society

Deacons must be involved with the world

58. The diaconate is lived in a particularly powerful way in the manner in which a deacon fulfills his obligations to his secular occupation, to his civic and public responsibilities, and among his family and neighbors. This, in turn, enables the deacon to bring back to the Church an appreciation of the meaning and value of the Gospel as he discerns it in the lives and questions of the people he has encountered. In his preaching and teaching, the deacon articulates the needs and hopes of the people he has experienced, thereby animating, motivating, and facilitating a commitment among the lay faithful to an evangelical service in the world.

The deacon and the new evangelization

59. Specifically, in the third Christian millennium, “the whole Church is called to greater apostolic commitment which is both personal and communitarian, renewed and generous.” At the heart of this call is an awareness of a new evangelization: i.e., “To rekindle the faith in the Christian conscience of many and cause the joyful proclamation of salvation to resound in society.” The deacon, as herald of the Gospel, has an important pastoral responsibility in new evangelization. Pope John Paul II reminds the Church that “what moves me even more strongly to proclaim the urgency of missionary evangelization is the fact that it is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual...in the modern world.” The deacon is ordained precisely for service in both the sanctuary and the marketplace.

60. The secular employment of a deacon is also linked with his ministry. Although his secular work may benefit the community, some professions can become incompatible with the pastoral responsibilities of his ministry. The bishop, “bearing in mind the requirements of ecclesial communion and of the fruitfulness of pastoral ministry, shall evaluate individual cases as they arise, [and may require] a change of profession after ordination.”

Deacons and priests, as ordained ministers, should develop a genuine respect for each other, witnessing to the communion and mission they share with one another and with the diocesan bishop in mutual service to the People of God.

National Directory
page 29

Congregation for the Clergy,
Directory for the Ministry and life of Permanent Deacons (Directorium Pro Ministerio et Vita Diaconorum Permanentium) (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998)

New ministry tools

...for a contemporary world



**Join the growing
number of deacons who
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Save the date and mark your calendars for upcoming elective classes open to both candidates in formation and ordained deacons. Sessions are held at our convenient satellite site at the DePaul-O'Hare Campus: 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. Enrollment information is available upon request.

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Navigating the various personalities in parish leadership

Saturday, September 8, 2012

Enabling Positive Marriage Relationships

Saturday, September 22, 2012

INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY *of* SAINT MARY *of* THE LAKE

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CANDIDATE ACTIVITY

...in February

FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Anne Chrzan



I AM SURE MANY OF OUR PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE THE first to say there is no evidence of cabin fever in their lives. The courses that the candidates and some wives are taking for the Winter Quarter will be coming to an end in the middle of February followed by a break during the start of the Lenten Season.

Women of Witness

Candidates in year one are taking New Testament with Fr Jim McIlhone, Candidates in year two: Presiding at Rites and Rituals Intensive with Deacon Bob Puhala, and, the candidates in year three: Homiletics IV with Fr Britto Berchmans. The *Women of Witness* Winter quarter segment will take place on February 4, 2012 at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. The segment topic will be “**Extraordinary Women/Extraordinary Lives.**” The women will be reflecting on the Women Religious Communities who graciously shared their lives for us. We will be watching the Documentary “**A Question of Habit**” written, produced and directed by Bren Ortega Murphy, a wife of a year one candidate. Throughout the day, the women will be sharing how these women religious lives are impactful in their personal lives and how their spirituality is formed by the women religious communities.

ASPIRANCY (15 aspirants)

- Presiding at Rites & Rituals I
- Homiletics I

CANDIDACY YEAR 1 (10 candidates)

- Introduction to New Testament
- Human Growth & Development
- (Ongoing) Service to the Word Field Education
- Women of Witness

CANDIDACY YEAR 2 (18 candidates)

- Presiding at Rites & Rituals Intensive
- (Ongoing) Service to Liturgy Internship
- Women of Witness

CANDIDACY YEAR 3 (10 candidates)

- Homiletics IV
- Presiding at Rites & Rituals IV
- Worship II
- Johanine Literature
- Women of Witness

CARDINAL STITCH
RETREAT HOUSE

An atmosphere of prayer in a beautiful wooded setting. Stritch is *the* retreat house for your private retreats - during and after formation. Call Deacon Richard Hudzik 847-566-6060 to arrange your time for prayer.

MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS

The Institute for Diaconal Studies encourages all deacons and pastors of the Archdiocese of Chicago to invite interested inquirers to attend an “Exploring the Permanent Diaconate” session at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, Illinois (*attendance at one session is only required*).

Sunday, February 19, 2012 – 12:00 P.M. (Mass)

A LIGHTER SIDE

...in the telling of the Story



Didimus, the deacon candidate, perused –
Do you know what mountains talk about?
A range of topics! (*rim shot!*)

2011 DJStafford



Modern formation of candidates involves a wide range of topics and a vast array of necessary theology and pastoral skills that need time and attention!

Children love being measured – line them up against the wall and get the yardstick out. I remember fondly every couple of months standing against the kitchen door jam and my dad marking the jam with a pencil. It was exciting to see the notch creep up the wall.

And when my cousin stopped by – who lived downstairs in our two-flat - she was just as excited to see the growth being charted. “Look at the difference four years has made,” my dad would proudly exclaim.

My aunt was also good-spirited and I remember her telling me “You’ll be full-grown in quick order and I hope and pray you grow more to be like Jesus, too!”

When I was young that was a difficult concept to understand. But as I grew older it had an impact and I asked my parents how people will notice if I had grown like Jesus.

“That’s a good question,” my mom would say. “Remember that Irish temper of yours? Are you controlling it?”

“I was angry with my friend Philip last week, but I apologized,” I confessed.

“You’re always fighting with Georgie,” she exclaimed. “I shook hands with him yesterday,” I responded.

“What about arithmetic?” mom asked. “I do all of my homework now with cousin Eileen’s help,” I proudly said.

“I’d say that’s progress,” dad jubilantly offered.

“And I think that Jesus would be proud, too!” mom would offer as she giggled.

Growth in wisdom, application and grace:
It’s a proud and wonderful thing to witness.

Padre Dionisio



But seriously folks – pray over this thought...

Rabbi Mendel taught – “There is a very high rung which only one man in a whole generation can reach: that of having learned all secret wisdom and then praying like a little child.”

Formation in this modern age provides essential knowledge which leads to applicable wisdom in pastoral ministry. We candidates are proud to be on the cutting edge of contemporary models of learning. Knowledge, wisdom and humble prayer go hand-in-hand.



IDS NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE

To support financially needy candidates and parishes

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Name engraved on plaque at USML

(In Memory of...) (In Honor of...)

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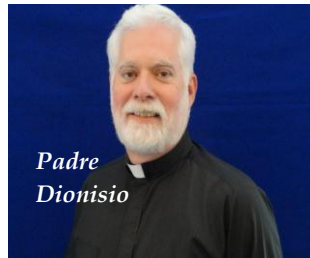
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\$3,000 minimum donation - Name engraved on plaque at USML; Monthly Newsletter recipient; Inclusion in monthly Newsletter; personal plaque for individual or parish usage

The **INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES** also encourages deacon ordination classes and parish organizations to pray over the potential of a group gift or scholarship.

Contact Deacon Bob Puhala at 847-837-4564 and learn about the many ways you can become an IDS steward.

Rev. Dennis Stafford



Padre
Dionisio

Journey over destination

Power lies in the circumstances of the journey

WE

all have something in common. It's something we share with 100% certainty; intrinsic and very profound. We will all experience death: Sublime death.

An eastern philosopher once said, "Death gives loveliness to life. Whatever is beautiful and truly alive must die. Look at the flowers; only plastic flowers never face death."

Most people fear death because they don't know what's on the other side. People make jokes to cover their fear, to mask uncertainty with a shroud in the humble hope of not having to unmask the unknowable. An adventure of life is to seek the unseen with eyes wide open. A New York writer wanted to 'will' his body to science and he selected Harvard University because, he said, "My parents wanted me to go there and this is the only way I can get in." And, there is the story of the funeral director who closed all of his letters with "eventually yours." Not only do we employ 'masks' but we inject jocularity.

But where is the 'power?' It doesn't lie in death's finality - I believe the power lies in the journey and celebrations of life.

And, just as so many people fear the human finality of death many people fear the journey of living. Fear is a strong word. Yet, fear is appropriate when the process of living is approached with singular focus - routine, expediency, destination and accolades.

There is 100% certainty in death and I believe there can, and should, be certainty in our living - grace to bear our crosses. Maybe, that is the key reason for the fear of life. This fear is not innate. It is a choice to avoid rather than conquer our crosses. As Christians, we know where death leads but we don't necessarily have a grasp on where life and our individual - and collective - crosses lead.

Today's crosses resemble the ones our parents endured only with new faces. We could name many but let's focus on our neediness and value systems.

We are constantly thrown into situations (peculiarly contemporary because of technology) that require us to be 'pioneers,' people with the appropriated value system to 'boldly go where few have gone before' - to borrow a phrase from 1960's television.

But we need to emphasize that

it is the wise pioneer who can accept life's crosses and knows better than to take short cuts. Those who prefer a 'fast-track' may be prone to limited vision that projects expediency, routine or destination as primary and accolades and recognition as the end goal. Not a very wise choice.

And, what is the relationship of our value system to engaging a pioneer spirit? Instant solutions, wealth, power, gratification are categories in modern society that propagate attitudes of expedited worldly expectations and perceived entitlements. Pioneers are visionaries with a long-term commitment where wholeness and holiness are viewed as the essentials and wisdom and application primary goals. If commitment and wisdom are secrets to beginning a successful business, they certainly are keys to successful marriages and a relationship with Jesus. Wisdom takes a lifetime to accumulate so why are we in such a hurry?

Today's crosses resemble the ones our parents endured only with new faces.

Plain and simple: there are no shortcuts to career success, marriage stability, successful and manageable parish councils or parish staffs or the journey of formation and preparation for ministry. A journey requires consideration of the wholeness and holiness of its various stages.

Power - glorious power - may be a human desire but is not a want for the pioneer. Our power as ministers for the Lord is recognized and fulfilled when we take the time to celebrate the journey of life with delays, crosses and all.

**A decision to
learn about the
potential of a
vocation is a
joyful
experience!**

**The Institute for
Diaconal Studies
asks all deacons,
pastors and parish
leaders to encourage
all who may be
discerning a vocation
to join the "Inquiry
Path."**



"Exploring the Permanent Diaconate"

Sunday, February 19, 2012

12:00 (noon) Mass

Cardinal Stritch Retreat House, Mundelein, Illinois

Ask a mentor ...

DEACON KEVIN O'DONNELL was ordained in 2006 and with his wife, Anita, resides in St. Fabian Parish in Bridgeview, Illinois. They are currently mentors to a group of Year 2 candidates and their wives.



What is your favorite memory of being a mentor?

There have been many memories over the years; both happy and sad, but I believe my favorite memory from mentoring is still to come. I am looking forward to the ordination of our first two Aspirants this May. It's a blessing knowing that we were able to be a part of their formation and watch them grow.

Did you ever wish you could be a candidate today to experience the camaraderie and value of theological reflection as it is employed in the current mentor groups?

When I was a Candidate, Anita and I were in a wonderful mentor group, at that time they were called FIGS (Faith Integration Groups). I think that our group had a lot of the same dynamics that groups today have. Instead of starting each meeting with a Berekah prayer, as we do now, we opened our session by praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Then we would read and reflect on the readings for upcoming Sunday. I found this to be very helpful in getting different opinions and interpretations on what the readings mean to others and how that reflected on what I saw in the readings. I have taken that experience with me and tried to incorporate it into sessions with our Candidates.

What is the primary value to candidates and wives of being engaged in theological reflection?

The current Theological Reflection Group gives everyone in the group a chance, including the wives, to participate in the evening's discussion and to share an understanding of the readings for all to discuss. These discussions are meant as an opportunity for all, to help broaden and strengthen their spiritual growth. During our sessions they are also able to freely discuss their concerns and/or ask questions about formation without feeling like they are being judged or that their questions may sound silly.

Paint a picture of the growth experienced by the candidates and wives in the small group setting?

As the years have progressed, Anita and I have noticed that all Aspirants and Candidates grow a little more each year. From the first meeting, especially with the Aspirants, they would sit there very quiet and didn't know what to expect. We went from nervousness and sometimes hesitation to participation; to people volunteering to read, pray and share. We've gone from wives who said they could never talk openly, to wives who are not afraid to share their faith. It is truly a blessing.

How is mentoring for IDS the same or different in comparison to mentors in the secular environment?

As with any journey, whether spiritual or secular, all of us need someone to show us how to get things done. As a businessman I had formal education to learn my profession but I really relied upon my colleagues to show me the ropes. As a mentor I can take the moment to teach these men and women what they will experience in their spiritual journey and guide them along their path. All of us need guidance in our life as to expectations in our ministerial roles and I still rely upon priests and deacons to help me answer the Lord's calling. As a mentor I can be catalyst to move these Aspirants and Candidates on the spiritual journey.

Words of wisdom ...

Give the Holy Spirit a chance to call you and strengthen your gifts to ministry. Never get discouraged, the Holy Spirit will guide you on your journey. Listen to the Spirit.

Some FAQ's



I would like to minister in the Church. Is a deacon a part-time or full-time position?

A permanent deacon assumes his ordained role 24/7 and is obligated to fulfill the three-fold aspects of diaconal ministry (word, liturgy, charity), daily structured prayer and correct Christian moral living while also engaged in his full-time family and job responsibilities. But the diaconate is neither a job nor a salaried position. It is ordained ministry manifested by answering God's call to a vocation. Being invited and accepted into the aspirancy and candidate paths is not an invitation to career change or career advancement. Employment and personal financial sustenance are a requirement for acceptance into the program.

How old do you need to be to apply?

An applicant has to be at least 31 years of age at time of application. The program is a minimum of four years in length and Canon law of the Catholic Church stipulates that a man must be at least 35 at the time of ordination to the permanent diaconate. (Maximum age for application in the Archdiocese of Chicago is 62).

**Inquisitive minds
want to know!**

Discernment of a vocation is a life-long process and receives particular attention during the formation journey.

INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES

THE PRIMARY MISSION of the Institute for Diaconal Studies at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake is to prepare men to be deacons – icons of Christ the Servant, emissaries of the bishop and servant leaders – through a distinctive formation process for ministry in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

It does so by offering a distinct program and process that addresses specifically the mission and identity of diaconal ministry in the Human, Intellectual, Spiritual and Pastoral dimensions of formation while educating men for the three-fold ministry of service to the Word, Liturgy and Charity.

Are you interested in inquiring about becoming a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Chicago?

Do you know someone who might be a good candidate?

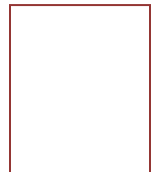
Please visit our web site to view important information: www.usml.edu, click on *Ministry Formation*, then click *Deacon Formation*

- FAQ's, Application criteria
- Inquiry session dates, personal visit from a Vocation Liaison
- Curricula foundations
- On-Line Discernment Retreat
- Helpful aids to pastors including Ambassadors and a Speakers Bureau

UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY of THE LAKE

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