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DFP Journal



DEACON FORMATION

UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY of THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

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DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

REVEREND DENNIS J. STAFFORD

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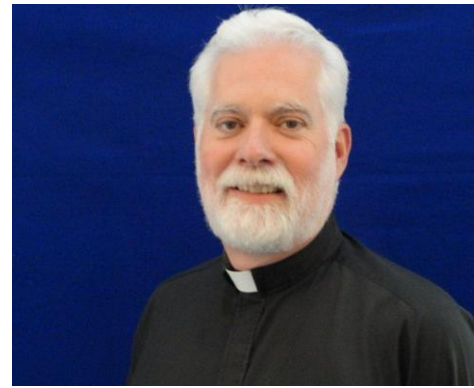
FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE... well, you can fill in the blank. An interesting morning to say the least: women priests in cassocks scattered throughout the university refectory with not one empty seat available (Society of the Holy Trinity - Lutheran); driving back to the office with a plate of scrambled eggs in one hand as I attempted to shift the gears in my car (and I didn't spill a thing); a locked front door with no available hand to find the key; Director Bob knocking on my door giving me his article for this issue of *DFP Journal* and exclaiming "great Caesar's ghost" as he often does when providing his written pieces to me for final redaction; and, the constant ringing in my ears of a familiar refrain we hear so often in the Deacon Formation Program office - from pastors and candidates alike - "Why do we have to study theology?"

Deacon Bob Puhala has a wonderful feature this month (next page) that begins to develop a cogent answer to this very direct question - a question that is understandable only to a degree. After all we all lead extremely busy lives. Why not just ordain men immediately?

But for most of us, I believe, logic and reason begin to settle in. Our candidates are all good people, dedicated to serving the Lord with an energetic and enthusiastic faith - and they wish they could begin ministry immediately. Yet, for those who have studied the documents (USCCB) that provide the foundations and guidelines for formation programs a new realization takes root. Permanent deacons are called to possess a level of wisdom befitting their three-fold ministerial role of Word, Liturgy and Charity. Whether we wish to admit it or not, this is a level above and beyond the worshipper in the pew.

Pope Benedict XVI in September 2011 addressed the seminarians in Germany. His words are applicable to candidates for the permanent diaconate. "...study is very much a part of the journey... be prepared to [...] account for the hope that is in you."

By the way, for those born after 1960, Perry White - who constantly exclaimed "great Caesar's ghost" - was Clark Kent's (Superman) editor-in-chief.



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Feature

Why Study Theology?

Deacon Bob Puhala

“Why

do deacon candidates have to study so much theology these days?” This is one of the more frequent questions directors of deacon formation programs hear lately. And it’s a fair question. The argument goes something like this, perhaps best articulated by Christopher A. Hall in his recent book, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*: Frustrated with the complexities of the Trinity or the hypostatic union, (candidates) may ask, “Why do we need to bother with this? Isn’t the gospel really more simple? After all, even a child can understand Jesus’ message. All theology does is complicate matters and create an intellectual elite. It’s a recipe for spiritual pride and deception. Can’t we skip it and get back to the message of Christ?”

Even Church Fathers, as Hall notes, sometimes felt the same way. Hilary of Poitiers, for example, commenting on Jesus’

baptismal command to His apostles (“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”) said, “What element in the mystery of man’s salvation is not included in those words? What is forgotten, what left in the darkness?” In other words, why can’t we simply teach and proclaim the simplicity of the gospel and leave it at that?

There are several responses to these questions ...

and they all can’t be explored in this brief article. But let me note three. As recently as last year, during his general audience focusing on St. Dominic of Guzman, Benedict XVI exhorted both clergy and lay people to study theology in order to better to preach and live the gospel. “I encourage all ... to cultivate this cultural dimension of faith (the study of theology), that the beauty of Christian truth may be better understood and the faith truly nourished, strengthened and defended.” The Pope also called for a “unity of study with prayer in order to know God on a deeper level” – and be better prepared to proclaim “Christ, the most precious treasure,” to men and women of all times and places who “have the right to know and love Him.” In other words, you can’t bring Christ to others unless *you* truly understand the faith and Christ intimately.

Another clue to the “why theology” question can be gleaned by a quick perusal of the *Basic Standards of Readiness for the*

Ordination Path in the USCCB’s *National Directory* (which mandates requirements for deacon formation in the United States). It notes that a candidate must have a considerable knowledge of theology in order to minister as a deacon. For example, a candidate must be able to demonstrate the relationship between philosophy and theology; explain the relationship of Trinitarian theology to Christology and ecclesiology; articulate the basic aspects and principles of Christian anthropology; have a knowledge and appreciation of traditional and contemporary Christology; be able to articulate an understanding of redemptive revelation of the kingdom; and much, much more.

continued on page 4

Yes, theological study for deacon candidates can be complicated, frustrating, difficult, challenging – it might even seem burdensome to some. But it not only better prepares one to be a better herald of the Good News; it is, according to Benedict XVI, “a service to be rendered with dedication and humility.”

A Diaconal Mandate

Feature continued from page 3

Finally, Hilary of Poitiers might have answered his own question, and ours, best. In his treatise, *On the Trinity*, he writes: “For there have risen many who have given to the plain words of holy Writ some arbitrary interpretation of their own, instead of its true and only sense.” He goes on to say that since distorted messages of the gospel undercut its true meaning, there is always a crucial need to, as Hall summarizes it, “explain, clarify and protect the basic message of the gospel.”

Yes, theological study for deacon candidates can be complicated, frustrating, difficult, challenging – it might even seem burdensome to some. But it not only better prepares one to be a better herald of the Good News; it is, according to Benedict XVI, “a service to be rendered with dedication and humility.”

Check out:

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

Evangelization

I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING CATHOLIC EVANGELIZING WITH YOU in the months and years to come and to moving together with you as we become an evangelizing Church.

Along this path, we have many companions, teachers and guides. On October 19th, the Holy Father declared St. Therese of Lisieux a doctor of the Church because she helps us to read the Gospel in a more profound way. She is also the patroness of missionaries, and I place the evangelizing efforts of the Archdiocese in her hands and under her care.

St. Therese had the heart of a missionary. She possessed a great and consistent desire, even though her final illness, to go to where Christ was not yet well known. In her case, she desired to go to one of the recently established Carmelite monasteries in Vietnam.

St. Therese remained in prayerful solidarity with missionaries, holding them up to God and offering her own sufferings on their behalf. At the request of her religious superior, she “adopted” two missionary brothers, Brother Maurice Belliere and Father Adolphe Roulland.

Most profoundly, she is a missionary because of her vocation “to be love in the Church.” She wrestled with the various callings that came to her from her study of God’s will and came on day to an insight: “I understood that love comprised all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and places...I cried out...my vocation, at last I have found it...my vocation is love. Yes, I have found my place in the Church.”

Because she found her place, we can find ours – to be signs and agents of God’s universal love here in our Archdiocese. That is my prayer for myself and all of you; I hope it will be your prayer for me. God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago
November 1997

Becoming an Evangelizing People

Excerpt from the first pastoral letter of Francis Cardinal George,
Archbishop of Chicago

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

**VI. The Church's Ministry of Liturgy:
The Deacon as Sanctifier**

33. For the deacon, as for all members of the Church, the liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows." For the Church gathered at worship, moreover, the ministry of the deacon is a visible, grace-filled sign of the integral connection between sharing at the Lord's Eucharistic table and serving the Herald of the Gospel Witnessing the Word in his own life, the deacon leads people to their practice of charity and justice Liturgical ministry many hungers felt so keenly by all God's children. In the deacon's liturgical ministry, as in a mirror, the Church sees a reflection of her own diaconal character and is reminded of her mission to serve as Jesus did.

34. In the context of the Church's public worship, because of its centrality in the life of the believing community, the ministry of the deacon in the threefold diakonia of the word, of the liturgy, and of charity is uniquely concentrated and integrated. "The diaconate is conferred through a special outpouring of the Spirit (*ordination*), which brings about in the one who receives it a specific conformation to Christ, Lord and servant of all." "Strengthened by sacramental grace, they are dedicated to the people of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in a service of the liturgy of the word and of charity."

35. During the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, the deacon participates in specific penitential rites as designated in the *Roman Missal*. He properly proclaims the Gospel. He may preach the homily in accord with the provisions of Canon Law. He voices the needs of the people in the General Intercessions, needs with which he should have a particular and personal familiarity from the circumstances of his ministry of charity. The deacon assists the presider and other ministers in accepting the offerings of the people – symbolic of his traditional role in receiving and distributing the resources of the community among those in need – and he helps to prepare the gifts for sacrifice. During the celebration he helps the faithful participate more fully, consciously, and actively in the Eucharistic sacrifice, may extend the invitation of peace, and serves as an ordinary minister of Communion. Deacons have a special responsibility for the distribution of the cup. Finally, he dismisses the community at the end of the eucharistic liturgy. Other liturgical roles for which the deacon is authorized include those of solemnly baptizing, witnessing marriages, bringing *viaticum* to the dying, and presiding over funerals and burials. The deacon can preside at the liturgies of the word and communion services in the absence of a priest. He may officiate at celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours and at exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He can conduct public rites of blessing, offer prayer services for the sick and dying, and administer the Church's sacramentals, as designated in the *Book of Blessings*.

We see with joy how deacons 'sustained by the grace of the Sacrament, in the ministry (*diakonia*) of the liturgy, of the word and of charity are at the service of the People of God, in communion with the Bishop and his priests.'"

National Directory
page 17

Pope John Paul II, post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)* (January 22, 1999) (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1999), no. 42, citing LG, no. 29.

Humility

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility – humility is endless.

T.S. Eliot

A candidate's thoughts...

I wanted to express my hope that we as a (cohort) would continue to meet at DePaul - O'Hare. The campus has been a state of the art experience, when we are together at DePaul we are growing closer together in ministry, and getting to know each other so much better. I find the site to be really inspiring because it elevates our instruction in a real collegiate, challenging way. We as a class feel we are really being taken seriously and challenged academically because we are at DePaul. We are able to pray together, experience fellowship, and discuss the information being presented in the classroom as a group. I pray we, as a cohort, will continue to study and learn at DePaul - O'Hare and appreciate all that the diaconate (DFP) staff is doing to provide us with exemplary instruction in our faith.

Bill Hynes, *Cohort 2014*
8100 South in Chicago – St. Sabina, Chicago

Helpful reminders...for the newly ordained

From the General Instruction on the Roman Missal

171. When he is present at the Eucharistic Celebration, a deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. For the deacon:

- a. Assists the priest and remains at his side;
- b. Ministers at the altar, with the chalice as well as the book;
- c. Proclaims the Gospel and, at the direction of the priest celebrant, may preach the homily (cf. no. 66);
- d. Guides the faithful by appropriate introductions and explanations, and announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful;
- e. Assists the priest celebrant in distributing Communion (especially the Cup), and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- f. As needed, fulfills the duties of other ministers himself if none of the is present.

National news from the National Association of Diaconate Directors

The *Institute for the Formation and Ministry of the Diaconate* – The Pontifical College Josephinum in association with the National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD) offers twelve-week courses delivered via the internet. Each earns two graduate credit hours (48 class hours). For details: 1-877-933-2266; email deacons@pcj.edu

Additional page added to DFP web site

Be sure to check out the new page appearing on the DFP web site – “**Picture Gallery.**” Keep up with the current events of Deacon Formation through the pictorial display

Mary, teacher of humility, who by constantly knowing yourself to be the servant of the Lord were filled with the Holy Spirit, make deacons docile instruments in Christ's work of redemption by teaching them the greatness of being the least of all.

DFP JOURNAL *October 2011*

FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Anne Chrzan



Recently, the inventor of the pacemaker, William Greatbatch, passed away at the age of 92. He developed over 150 inventions including the pacemaker. His

philosophy was for every ten inventions, nine inventions will fail and one will make you enough money to cover the cost of the nine failed ones. It was important to never give up!

With faith, God wants us to succeed each time we use prayer. The men in the Deacon Formation Program apply the principles of faith to everything they do in developing their skills and knowledge into being the best deacons possible to serve in the Archdiocese. It is with this faith that each course, formation session and prayer moment is a success. It is also wonderful to have so many people (wives, family, friends, deacons/wives and priests) who are a part of the DFP family who support these men. They become a part of the invention (formation). What an incredible gift we have within our church.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Reverend Dennis J. Stafford

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION is a relationship between two believers that live a radical belief in the divine gift of the Incarnation. It is a journey directed by the Holy Spirit and a relationship: one of whom shares their faith and its manifestations in his or her life and the other who reflects that experience back through the prism of resources, Tradition and wisdom of the Church.

It is not counseling nor is it therapy.

It comprises the essentials of the art of conversation and its inherent active listening skills. It requires a humble heart and the desire for self-understanding. By its very nature it begs for the use of active imagination that is genuine and authentic. It allows for openness to God in a spirit of self-surrender where the Christian heart may focus on the genuine, real world. It provides an opportunity for the use of reflexive consciousness: recalling and reliving moments of grace. The goals for the directee include articulation, clarification and vocation discernment.

What are the aspirants and candidates doing in October?

ASPIRANCY (15 aspirants)

- Lectio Divina
- History, Theology and Spirituality of the Diaconate
- Women of Witness

CANDIDACY YEAR 1 (10 candidates)

- Sacraments of Initiation
- Old Testament
- Evangelization
- Service to Charity Integration Seminar
- Presiding at Rites & Rituals I
- Homiletics II
- (Ongoing) Service to the Word Field Education

CANDIDACY YEAR 2 (18 candidates)

- Ecclesiology
- Eucharist as Sacrament & Sacrifice
- (Ongoing) Service to Liturgy Internship

CANDIDACY YEAR 3 (10 candidates)

- Integrating Seminar
- Sacraments of Healing & Vocation
- Christology
- Presiding at Rites & Rituals IV

The Deacon Formation Program (English) 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*).

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

Sunday, November 20, 2011 – 12:00 P.M. (Mass)

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

CARDINAL STRITCH 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

OCTOBER BRIEFS

Attention Inquirers – Exploring the Permanent Diaconate

For all men beginning to hear the Holy Spirit inviting them to investigate the potential of a vocation – please refer to the ‘Links’ page on the DFP web site www.usml.edu (click on Ministry Formation, then click Deacon Formation) and click on ‘Exploring the Permanent Diaconate.’ Our next gathering is **Wednesday, October 19, 2011** at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, Illinois (USML campus).

Theological Reflection Groups led by a mentor deacon

All aspirants and candidates have attended their first gathering in a Theological Reflection Group (TRG) for the formation year 2011-2012. The groups are small faith communities, arranged geographically for reduced travel times, which focus on continuing vocation discernment in the context of theological reflection. A deacon and his wife serve as mentor facilitators and are invaluable in assisting the aspirants and candidates.

Aspirants get their feet wet

Aspirants have attended two formation events thus far and are getting acclimated to the aspirancy path. The first year (aspirancy) in formation prepares men, and their wives, for future theological study and ‘hands-on’ training during candidacy (3 years).

RECENT PRESS RELEASE

October 2011

Information sessions are a great hit

MUNDELEIN, IL – The Deacon Formation Program (English) of the Archdiocese of Chicago offers four (4) opportunities throughout the year for men to gather: to pray, dialogue and ask the important questions on their mind about a potential vocation to the permanent diaconate. The sessions gather at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House located on the campus of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois (Route 173 just west of Butterfield Road).

2011-2012 schedule:

- Thursday, September 15, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.
- **Wednesday, October 19, 2011– 7:30 P.M.**
- Sunday, November 20, 2011– 12:00 noon (Mass)
- Sunday, February 19, 2012 12:00 noon (Mass)

88. In addition, care should be taken that the future deacons develop a strong missionary sensitivity, In fact, they too, in an analogous way to priests, receive with sacred ordination a spiritual gift which prepares them for a universal mission, to the ends of the earth (cf *Acts 1:8*).

Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons

Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons (Vatican)

United States Catholic Conference 1998

Cf. Ecum. Council Vat. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 10; Decr. *Ad gentes*, 90

Didimus*...and his sidekick Grace!*

Didimus, the deacon candidate, offered this pithy note – What’s a parish? It’s the capital of Fransh! (*rim shot!*)

2011 DJStafford



...great googly-moogly! At least I know our boy is learning about parish life!



But seriously folks – pray over this thought...

... In the Gospel of Mark (4:28) we read “Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.”

Please know that we candidates in formation for the permanent diaconate are growing in spiritual and theological maturity. It’s wonderful to experience and we plan to positively impact our parishes and the Archdiocese of Chicago.

STEWARDSHIP

*Help us help the men in formation!
Become a DFP steward!*

THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM (DFP) invites all of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Chicago to pray for the dedicated men, and their wives, currently in formation as well as those discerning joining the program. Prayer is the first – and most vital – aspect of Christian stewardship. The DFP also encourages everyone to prayerfully consider their personal role in being a steward and contributing to the ongoing success of individual aspirants or candidates and the formation program.

Stewardship is a way of life - a way of thanking God for all blessings by returning a generous portion of time, talent and treasure. Stewardship engenders a spirituality that deepens our relationship with the Lord and involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure.

Contact Deacon Bob Puhala at the Deacon Formation Program: 847-837-4564 and learn about the many ways you can become a DFP steward.



Wives of Aspirants and Candidates invariably grow and benefit enormously as they accompany their husbands in the formation program.

Four Main Characteristics - DFP Mentors

Mentors as People of Prayer

- Grounded
- Spiritual
- Authentic/Genuine
- Humble

Mentors as Facilitators

- Skilled listener
- Empathetic
- Affirming
- Non-shaming/non-judgmental
- Leadership qualities are visible
- Hospitable/welcoming/warm
- Ability to name (and tame) the truth, both positive and negative

Mentors as Formators

- Ability to discern a vocation and assist discernment
- Mature identity
- Trustworthy
- Organizational skills/leadership
- Insightful/ability to discern the unspoken
- Help to integrate head and heart
- Ability to articulate faith and spirituality is grounded in the "mind of the Church"
No personal agendas
- Partners with DFP staff and other Mentor Couples
Teaming as a couple and as DFP
- Balanced Theology of the Diaconate
Realistic about lived lifestyle
- Mentor - NOT Teacher, Spiritual Director, Advocate

Mentors as Mutual Ministers

- Respectful
- Supportive
- Non-combative, non-competitive
- Pro-deacon/wife ministry but do not use the term deacon couple (Archdiocesan policy)
- Ability to model themselves as balanced
- Enthusiastic/Positive

A small glimpse of USML ...and Deacon Formation

THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM is part of the Department of Ministerial and Continuing Education, and functions as a component school of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary (USML), which is a “virtual” department of the Pastoral Center. It continues the rich history of the Center for Development in Ministry, with a much deeper synergy with the Seminary and Graduate School, the Ecclesiastical Faculty, the Liturgical Institute and the Conference Center.

The USML Department of Ministerial and Continuing Education builds upon the efforts of the Archdiocese of Chicago to provide training and development for its clergy. Those efforts began with the establishment of the Center for Pastoral Ministry. This history also includes long-standing collaboration with the Seminary and Graduate School.



The sharing and presence of both the aspirant/candidate and his wife in the program is essential.

THE PRIMARY MISSION of Deacon Formation at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary 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 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.

UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY of THE LAKE/
MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

DEACON FORMATION

English language

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

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

DEACON FORMATION (English)

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