

2011

DFP Journal



DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY of SAINT MARY of THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

SEPTEMBER

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DIRECTOR OF FORMATION

DEACON BOB PUHALA

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HE MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2011, welcomed more than 150 aspirants, candidates, wives, and families (as well as mentors, advisors and DFP staff) to another formation year of diaconate discernment. The 'newbies' were wide-eyed with wonder, excitement and not a little trepidation; they're still not sure what formation is or how they'll juggle God, family, job and formation.

Veterans come with anticipation of the challenges and graces of the upcoming schedule. But whether brand new or in their final year of candidacy, they have one thing in common –listening to the Lord's will in their discernment.

What are some of the benchmarks in this process? I'll mention just three: Growing communion with God – you recognize the need for transcendence, that there's something greater than yourself, that you're a seeker of God's truth, not of the world's or your own, and you grow spiritually; Maturing love for the Church –*Lumen Gentium* noted the Church is the sacrament of Christ, so do you understand your call to be an ecclesial Christian, to love the Church and practice fidelity to her teachings; Discovering the mystery of obedience – deacons promise obedience to the bishop, so just as Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father, can you hand yourself over entirely, completely, to God -- do you have enough love for the Church that you want to offer your whole self for its continuing life?

That's what sacrificial love is all about.

These are just a few of the questions everyone wrestles with during formation as they seek to discover the way God chooses for them to serve His Son's bride – the Church. Please pray that all in formation have the humility and maturity to test the authenticity of their call with the guidance of the Church.

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Feature

Deacons & Preaching

Deacon Bob Puhala

Back

in June, Bishop Alexander Sample of Marquette caused quite a stir in diaconate circles by issuing a 19-page pastoral letter to the permanent diaconate in his diocese, focusing on its history, spirituality, and future. That wasn't what prompted all the chatter. Rather, it was his statement in the document, citing the Latin text of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, that the Church's liturgical norms "rule out the notion of the deacon preaching the homily at Mass on a routine or scheduled basis." He may preach the homily at Mass for some identifiable advantage for the faithful in the congregation, Bishop Sample wrote, but not on a regular basis.

Thus began a stream of mostly angry comments on blogs from deacons across the country excoriating Bishop Sample for his perspective. The usual arguments, many mean-spirited, were represented: deacons preach just as well as priests, sometimes better; the "new American church" doesn't take its orders from Rome;

parishioners like their deacons more than their priests; what are norms, anyway, if they run contrary to what the people want; who needs to listen to "Bishop Simple;" and the funniest/saddest – "deacons have been 'showing up' the rest of the clergy since St. Stephen became the first martyr."

Anyone who actually takes time to thoughtfully read Bishop Sample's entire pastoral letter discovers that the bishop has great love and respect for the office of deacon. He calls the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent ministry "a great and visible sign of the working of the Holy Spirit" and a

"source of tremendous grace and blessings for the Church."

He notes that since restoration, "the local Church has been richly blessed by the witness and sacrifices of the fine men who have received ordination as permanent deacons. We give thanks to God for them and their ministry." But he also observes that the diocese has not been spared some of the same misunderstandings, misinterpretations and confusion about diaconal ministry that have been evident in the universal Church.

While that notion of misunderstanding in theology and practice of the Second Vatican Council's restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order is the stuff of several doctoral theses rather than a very brief article, let's just look at what the GIRM

prescribes about preaching during a Eucharistic liturgy.

- 66. *The homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest or, occasionally, according to circumstances, to the deacon*

...

Based on the GIRM, Bishop Sample's statements seem like an accurate interpretation of the norm. Is it really a radical notion to deacons that the celebrant, rather than his principal *assistant*, should be the cleric who normally breaks open the Word for God's people? And if it is a disquieting principle for some deacons, might I ask why? If our service is rooted in humility, why should it bother us that the principal celebrant is the one who preaches?

This reading of the GIRM in no way suggests that some deacons aren't fine preachers or couldn't develop into adequate preachers.

Some of the most spiritual, thoughtful, provoking, enriching and challenging homilies I've ever heard have been offered by deacons at a variety of liturgies. The GIRM also in no way suggests that *all* priests are *better* preachers than deacons. Like deacons, some priests are excellent preachers. Like deacons, some priests could, to access a charitable phrase, use a homiletics refresher course.

But that's not the issue that Bishop Sample's letter addresses. Rather, it is that there have been some misunderstandings and missteps in theology and practice

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since the Second Vatican Council. And bringing diaconal ministry back within the intended norms of the universal Church is a good thing.

In the Archdiocese of Chicago, men who are ordained deacons currently receive the faculty to preach. It wasn't always the case. When I was ordained in 1998, a candidate had to "earn" this faculty in the homiletics course. A failing grade meant that one was ordained *without* the preaching faculty; further, it was up to the candidate, and at his own expense, to enroll in an approved university/homiletics course, receive a passing grade, and send a transcript to the vicar's office before receiving the faculty.

That policy created angst for some during homiletics instruction. But creative tension isn't necessarily a bad thing. Also, it is always beneficial for us deacons to remember that even if we hold the faculty for preaching, it is our pastors who rightfully decide if we will exercise that privilege to do so. Priest or deacon homilists, we all want only the best for the People of God.

So how can deacons assure their pastors that they are well-prepared to preach a homily when called upon, even if it is occasionally, as the GIRM notes? It starts with the formation program, where the DFP has initiated a four-year tract for homiletics preparation. That's a good start. The rest is up to all of us. □

A Diaconal Mandate

Evangelization

Here's a simple question: Have you consciously tried to bring someone outside your immediate family into the Catholic Church in the last year? If you haven't, you're hurting your own faith by preventing Jesus from reaching others through you. Do you talk about God with your spouse, your children, your family? Do you worship as a family every Sunday? It's common for teachers in our own Catholic schools to tell me that as many as half of their students don't attend Sunday Mass regularly. That's in our *Catholic* schools, where tuition can be expensive. So we have a contradiction. Some Catholic parents – in fact, too many Catholic parents – are willing to sacrifice part of their income to get a good moral education for their children, but then they don't follow it up in home with prayer, discussion, and regular participation in the liturgy. *Yet that's where the really crucial Catholic education takes place.* Without living faith in the home, these children grow up, enter society as citizens, and don't understand why a movie like *The Cider House Rules* is essentially just propaganda for killing unborn children.

God ordained the family as the place where the life of Christ, life in abundance, takes root in the human heart and spreads outward to embrace the world. God ordained the family to mirror His own love, the community of love within the Trinity, and to be the school of love that soul by soul, generation by generation, builds up the Church and advances her work of salvation.

Living the Catholic Faith – Rediscovering the Basics

Copyright 2001, Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. page 131

Servant Books/St. Anthony Messenger Service

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

Ministry of the Word

V. The Church's Ministry of the Word: The Deacon as Evangelizer and Teacher

31. The deacon participates as an evangelizer and teacher in the Church's mission of heralding the word. In the liturgy of the word, especially in the Eucharist or in those liturgies where he is the presiding minister, the deacon proclaims the Gospel. He may preach by virtue of ordination and in accord with the requirements of Canon Law. Other forms of the deacon's participation in the Church's ministry of the word include catechetical instruction; religious formation of candidates and families preparing for the reception of the sacraments; leadership roles in retreats, evangelization, and renewal programs; outreach to alienated Catholics; and counseling and spiritual direction, to the extent that he is properly trained. The deacon also strives to "transmit the word in [his] professional [life] either explicitly or merely by [his] active presence in places where public opinion is formed and ethical norms are applied."

32. In these and many other formal and informal ways, the deacon leads the community to reflect on their communion and mission in Jesus Christ, especially impelling the community of believers to live lives of service. Because the deacon sacramentalizes service, he should proclaim the word in such a way that he first witnesses its empowerment in his own life. Then he can effectively challenge others to practice the Church's ministry of charity and justice in the social environments in which people live their baptismal vocation. By his own faithful practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the deacon "by word and example . . . should work so that all the faithful, in imitation of Christ, may place themselves at the constant service of their brothers and sisters."

Deacons, both married and celibate, serve God's People by their witness to the gospel value of sacrificial love, a quality of life too easily dismissed in today's society. In their secular employment, deacons also make evident the dignity of human work.

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...the deacon's tasks include that of "promoting and sustaining the apostolic activities of the laity."

...he should feel encouraged to foster closeness between the ordained ministry and lay activities, in common service to the kingdom of God.

- Pope John Paul II, General Audience, *Deacons Have Many Pastoral Functions* (October 13, 1993), citing Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, (June 18, 1967), no.22.

Freedom to Serve

*We find
freedom
when we
find God;
we lose it
when we
lose him.*

Paul E. Sherer

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

Helpful reminders...for the newly ordained

From the General Instruction on the Roman Missal

128. Vested and carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon precedes the priest on the way to the altar or else walks at the priest's (right) side (if no book). (N.B. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sunday vestiture for the deacon is stole and dalmatic.)

129. With the priest he makes the proper reverence and goes up to the altar. After placing the Book of the Gospels on it, along with the priest he kisses the altar. If incense is used, he assists the priest in putting some in the censer and in incensing the altar.

A candidate's thoughts...

As a site DePaul's new campus offers a more central location, replacing 2 or 3 locations with the associated concerns over how different instructors present the course materials and then quiz/test us on them. The common timetables for the various years encourages fellowship as an ecclesial community, evidenced by the praying of the LOH before classes and the positive sharing of experiences and bread when we meet on Saturdays. The facilities are well lit, comfortable from a perspective of temperature and chairs, tables/desks with very pleasant and helpful staff. Also, we have adequate common areas for break-out sessions or coffee chats. Ample parking is available, and for evening and Saturday classes usually within a short distance of the front door. I think it's a great move on the part of the DFP. Thank You.

Stuart Heyes, *Cohort 2012*
Burr Ridge, IL – St. Cletus, LaGrange

Mary, teacher of faith, who by your obedience to the Word of God have cooperated in a remarkable way with the work of redemption, make the ministry of deacons effective by teaching them to hear the Word and to proclaim it faithfully.

DFP JOURNAL *September 2011*

FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Anne Chrzan



“Welcome back” were words I heard throughout the day on Sunday, August 28, 2011 at our annual Mass of the Holy Spirit. The mass signifies for us the beginning of

our formation year. The opening Eucharist is an opportunity to see old friends and meet new people.

After the celebration, each class gathered to become oriented to the new formation year with calendars, formation covenants, and new profile sheets with updated information about cohorts distributed. The candidates in year one begin their *Service to the Word* field education and the candidates in year two now begin their *Service to the Liturgy* internship. Both experiences conclude in the summer.

Here’s a glimpse of the academic courses being taught during the fall quarter. **Year One:** Sacraments of Initiation, Old Testament and Evangelization. **Year Two:** Ecclesiology and Eucharist as Sacrament and Sacrifice. **Year Three:** Sacraments of Healing & Vocation, Integrating Seminar and Christology.

DEVELOPING SPIRITUALITY

Reverend Dennis J. Stafford

IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT

of an aspirant or candidate’s spirituality is the on-going review of where we have been in a spiritual sense: how have we grown in personal prayer and public worship;

how do we incorporate devotional life and various prayer forms, such as *Lectio Divina*. It is

important that those in formation continually take a ‘snapshot’ of these history and growth areas. Within formation we refer to this as an On-going Spiritual Autobiography. As the primary spiritual director for all in formation, I provide affirmation and, hopefully, helpful suggestions for the continuing development of a spiritual lifestyle conducive to

effective diaconal ministry. Individual spiritual directors also provide valuable aid. The process is deeply engaged at the beginning of Candidacy Year 2 after taking the snapshot in Year 1.



What are the aspirants and candidates doing in September?

ASPIRANCY (15 aspirants)

- Intro to Christian Spirituality
- Family Issues/Marriage

CANDIDACY YEAR 1 (10 candidates)

- Sacraments of Initiation
- Old Testament
 - Evangelization
 - Rite of Candidacy
 - Women of Witness

CANDIDACY YEAR 2 (18 candidates)

- Ecclesiology
- Eucharist as Sacrament & Sacrifice
- Acolyte Retreat/Institution
- Women of Witness

CANDIDACY YEAR 3 (10 candidates)

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

The DFP is in the process of developing an Alumni Association

If you are interested in assisting this development, call Deacon Bob Puhala at 847-837-4564.

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*).

Thursday, September 15, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.
 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

The primary mission of the Deacon Formation Program (DFP) 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.



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