



Called To Serve

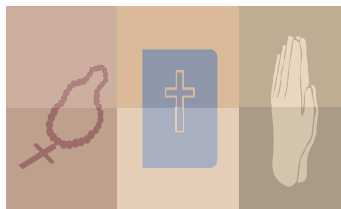
The Journey to Diaconal Ordination

A Newsletter by the
Permanent Deacon
Formation Class
of 2011
Volume 5

Fall 2009

Classwork in the Second Half of Formation

William G. Batz, Ph.D.



The 2011 class of deacon candidates began its formation program in mid-2006, and started through a series of 24 courses that will continue all the way through 2010. Classes in the “first half” – 2007 and 2008 – were decidedly abstract in terms of theology and Church dogma. Now in 2009 – the “third quarter” – the focus of studies is designed to prepare the deacons-to-be with practical knowledge in the art of ministry and theology applied to the problems of modern life.

Sister Marguerite Kropinak, CSJ immersed diaconal students in the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching expressed in papal documents ranging from *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to *Centesimus Annus* (1991), as well as the statements of U.S. bishops on pressing issues like the environment, racism, war and peace. A solid familiarity with magisterial teaching on social issues, she reminded the class, was especially appropriate for men who will be ordained to a ministry of charity and service. Most Catholics are well-aware of the Church’s bold witness on matters affecting the dignity of human life, especially

in the matter of abortion. Fewer people are equally versed in Catholic principles applied to timely issues like health care or the treatment of immigrants who are “strangers among us.” It will be a distinctly deacon-like duty to proclaim the full array of Catholic teaching in the workplace and the world of public affairs.

Father Charles W. Speicher, Ph.D., followed up with a course that challenged candidates to digest church documents and express them convincingly in the field of moral theology. How does one know what it means to be moral? What is the moral life? How do we bridge the tension between Catholic moral teaching and modern culture’s approach to “freedom” as the liberty to do whatever one pleases? Catholic moral teaching, Speicher explained, is not a dry list of “do’s” and “don’ts,” but instead, a call to holiness and perfection. When the Church teaches on moral issues, she proclaims the practical meaning of discipleship. This is not principally a matter of behavioral codes, but a response in love to God.

Fr. Regis Farmer, D. Min., rounded out the spring semester, 2009, with a thought-provoking introduction to pastoral counseling and ministry. Drawing on sources as diverse as Henri Nouwen’s *Wounded Healer* and the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, Fr.

Farmer prodded the deacon class to understand ministry in terms of spiritual companionship. “Put away your sword,” and avoid polemics, he said. A pastoral minister is not the “Answer Man.” “You are companionship.” Candidates were riveted by Farmer’s lessons on the “Unanswerable Questions.” How does a minister, in fact, deal with issues of suffering, death, grief and loss?

Courses in the fall term, 2009, continue the emphasis on applied theology in the areas of Pastoral Care, Ecumenism, and RCIA, as the Class of 2011 finishes out its “third quarter” of preparation.



John Ragan (Class of 2011) receives an encouraging word from Bishop David Zubik before class.



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A Word From Our Director

Deacon Stephen Byers

If you're looking for some inspirational reading about the diaconate—from its historic roots to its future promise—let me suggest Deacon William Ditewig's book *The Emerging Diaconate: Servant Leaders in a Servant Church*.

The term "servant leader" is a powerful expression of what it means to be a deacon. Bill elaborates on the expression in these words: "The entire diaconal ministry revolves around pastoral leadership, not in terms of positional authority...but in the sense of leading, inspiring, enabling, and modeling for other members of the Church what servant-leadership can mean in living the demands of Christian discipleship in the contemporary world."

As I prepare to assume my new responsibilities as director of our diocesan diaconate program, I do so

mindful of the model of humble servant leadership given to us by Jesus, who, in washing the feet of his disciples, left these instructions: "As I have done for you, you should also do."

I pray for the grace to be a good servant leader to all of you in formation as well as to my brother deacons and, in turn, to assist all of you, in whatever ways you may be called to live out your own ministries, to be good servant leaders as well.

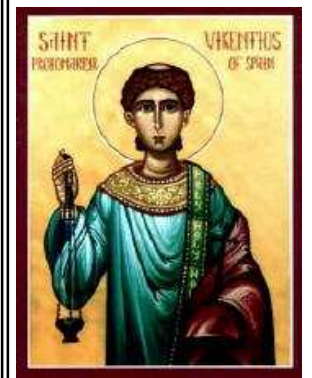
Please cherish this time of your formation as a special opportunity to grow in your personal relationship with the Lord through prayer, through scripture, and through the sacraments so that you will be well prepared. The people whom you will be expected to lead and to serve someday deserve nothing less.

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St. Vincent's Prayer for Deacons

Holy God, Saint Vincent served You as a permanent deacon and gave his whole life and soul to You, even to the point of becoming a martyr. I lift up to You the deacons of the Church and all those who are being called by God to become deacons. Guide them as they discern how to serve the Body of Christ. Prevent the attractions of the world and the busyness of secular jobs from interfering with their vocations. Teach them to grow in humility. Help their families learn from their examples and support their diaconates with trust and joy. Saint Vincent, pray for us.

Amen.



iPrayers!

Edwin P. Christmann, Ph.D.

It is clear that portable media players such as the Apple iPod and MP3 audio players are becoming as ubiquitous as cell phones. With the advent of podcasting, the potential of these devices has yet to be fully considered and explored.

One possibility, however, is to use Podcasting as a way to make spiritual and prayer content available for people to listen to at their leisure and at times when it is more convenient to listen to a Podcast than to read printed media, e.g., driving an automobile or working out at the gym. If you own an iPod or an MP3

audio player, you should consider uploading podcasts from Praystation, which is a great podcast if you want to inject a bit of spirituality into your busy day to day life.

Turn your mobile phone, your iPod or even your PSP into a powerful Praystation by subscribing to this free service. You will automatically download a fresh entire version of the Liturgy of the Hours for every day of the week. Praystation makes your prayer portable! You can find Praystation at [http://psp.libsyn.com/], however, if you own an iPod, you can find Praystation through an iTunes subscription.

Subscribers then enter the feed URL into their podcast aggregator and the aggregator retrieves each new episode of your podcast automatically.

Podcatchers like iTunes will also help subscribers transfer podcasts to their portable media devices so that they can listen to them when they want and where they want.

With the advent of podcasting, the potential of these devices has yet to be fully considered and explored. However, once you get started, you will find a variety of additional services that will be of interest. For example, every show on EWTN is available at <http://www.ewtn.com/podcast/index.asp>.

Moreover, Vatican Radio news is accessible at <http://www.radiovaticana.org/en1/podcast.asp> along with Francis Cardinal Arinze's monthly podcasts at <http://arinze.libsyn.com/>. It is now possible to enhance your spirituality with conveniently accessible and up-to-date broadcasts of the Divine Office and other interesting media information by subscribing to podcasts.



Candidates Share Reflections On Their 2009 Summer Pastoral Assignments. . . .

This past summer, the deacon candidates of the class of 2011 again made their way to various pastoral assignments around the diocese. Their experiences were as diverse as the people of God whom they served.

Tom Lopus traveled from his home parish of Ss. John & Paul in Franklin Park to the Allegheny County jail. Tom reflects that "at first, I was very unsure if the personal counseling would be very productive for the inmates and for that matter, very meaningful for me. However, I found that the one-on-one sessions with the inmates turned out to be one of the highlights of the experience. It was very natural to have compassion for their situations and needs. I also found that I learned much about myself and how to handle new situations.

Part of my assignment was the collection of lists, with varying levels of useful information, of possible employers and agencies. These lists were organized into a database for use by former inmates. This reference document now assists these individuals in determining what job opportunities are available for former inmates to get "back on their feet." It has already been put to good use and I was informed recently that it assisted in two recent hiring's of former inmates.

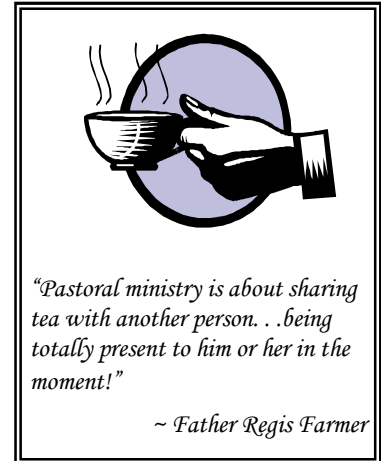
Fred Eckhardt spent his summer with the diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Fred states that "for my first summer experience I worked at my home parish of St. Bernard; my next assignment was at Shadyside Hospital. When I think of this summer's experience I recall the old Monty Python segue, "And now for something com-

pletely different". This summer's activities were many and varied. Among other things, I prepared and/or served meals for young people at retreats, the needy at the Red Door and the fans at a softball tournament.

It was a true honor, blessing and privilege to work with the youth of the diocese. I was impressed by their deep commitment to the Lord and to their Catholic faith. These were young men and women who were actively engaged in their faith, willing to serve the Lord and prepared to defend their faith before all comers. Though the world might degrade, diminish and dismiss the contributions of young people, I saw a core group of committed Catholic Christians who will be our leaders in the years to come. They are our future.

Jim Weiland spent his summer pastoral experience with St. John Lutheran Specialty Care Center in Mars, PA. "The most helpful aspect of the pastoral experience in my formation as a deacon candidate was the concept of service. Just as Jesus washed the feet of his Apostles - showing them how to serve others- I was able to serve the residents, by making myself available to talk and pray with them. Some of the residents could not speak, but I noticed a change in their facial expressions when I would hold their hand and pray. While visiting some of the Alzheimer's patients, I quickly learned not to lead with a question because that could lead to confusion. The more appropriate method was waiting for the patient to start the conversation. Some people just wanted me to sit with them in silence. All of these experiences gave me a better

understanding of what it means to serve the neediest of God's people. My spirituality has been affected by knowing that I cannot pastor with out prayer. As I helped gather the residents for Sunday worship, the chaplain would always have something personal to say to each resident. I consider this a special type of prayer as it lifted the spirit of everyone to whom she talked."



Welcome to the Class of 2013

Sister Patricia Rogan

In May, 2008 we welcomed the 2013 ordination class of deacons. This class is comprised of 23 men who range in age from 41 to 61. As in any other class these men come from varied occupations. They represent nine of the sixteen deaneries across the Diocese. All but one of these men is married. In December they completed the *propaedeutic period*, a time of discernment. Each aspirant was guided by his family, pastor, formation director, and spiritual director. During this period they attended classes and days of recollection.

In January, 2009 the men began the second phase of their formation. This semester was comprised of three classes: *Introduction to the Old Testament*, *Introduction to the New Testament* and *Spiritual Theology*. Father Charles Bober taught the first two classes and Father Kim Schreck taught the third class. As part of their journey on this next phase, they continued under the guidance of their family, pastor, formation director and spiritual director.

During this semester Maureen Crossen, Ph.D. facilitated a workshop on Theological Reflection I.

The class also participated in a June Retreat at Kearns Spirituality Center on June 19-21, 2009. Father-Joseph Mele directed the retreat for the men and their wives.



Diaconal Community bids Farewell to Sr. Pat Rogan

After 16 years in diocesan administration, Franciscan Sr. Pat Rogan retired from her various posts on August 31, 2009. Sr. Pat was a central figure in developing diaconal ministry in the diocese, guiding and directing all three classes selected since 1994. Deacons and deacon candidates in the 2011 and 2013 classes describe Sr. Pat as a treasure and a dear friend.

While we will miss her greatly, we are pleased that she is able to pursue a long-held dream to work more closely with the poor, which she will be able to do in her new assignment in the Charleston, SC area. Sister Pat leaves with all our love and prayers for her and her future ministry.

Instituted Acolytes and New Candidates

Edwin P. Christmann, Ph.D.

On September 13, 2009, the Institution to the Ministry of Acolyte was conferred on forty-five Candidates from Deacon Class of 2011. During the same ceremony, twenty-seven men received the Rite of Admission to Candidacy from the Class of 2013. The ceremony took place at Saint Bernadette Parish in Monroeville, PA. The Most Reverend David A. Zubik, M.S.Ed., D.D., Bishop of Pittsburgh, was the Principal Celebrant and Homilist. During the institution to the Ministry of Acolyte, the Very Reverend Harry R. Bielewicz, V.E., Vicar for Clergy, called each of the candidates, who responded "present," and made a sign of reverence to Bishop Zubik. During the Institution to the Ministry to Acolyte, each candidate received a vessel with the bread and wine to be consecrated and Bishop Zubik said:

"Take this vessel with the bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist. Make your life worthy of your service at the table of the Lord and his Church."

The **General Instruction of the Roman Missal** explains the duties of an Acolyte:

C. THE DUTIES OF THE ACOLYTE

187. The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties

while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

The Introductory Rites

188. In the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

189. Through the entire celebration, the acolyte is to approach the priest or the deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

190. If no deacon is present, after the Prayer of the Faithful is concluded and while the priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the priest. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

191. A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary min-



Bishop David Zubik confers the Ministry of Acolyte upon Joseph Basko (Class of 2011)

ister, may, if necessary, assist the priest in giving Communion to the people.¹⁰⁰ If Communion is given under both kinds, when no deacon is present, the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants or holds the chalice if Communion is given by intinction.

192. Likewise, when the distribution of Communion is completed, a duly instituted acolyte helps the priest or deacon to purify and arrange the sacred vessels. When no deacon is present, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes, and arranges them in the usual way.

193. After the celebration of Mass, the acolyte and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy, together with the deacon and the priest in the same way and order in which they entered.

According to Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter *Ad pascendum*, "Before anyone may be promoted to the diaconate, whether permanent or transitory, he must have received the ministries of lector and acolyte, and have exercised them for an ap-

propriate time." The next step for the Class of 2013 is to receive the Ministry of Lector. God willing, the next formal ceremony for the Deacon Class of 2011 will be Ordination.

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Upcoming Dates

November 14
Day of Recollection at Saint Paul Seminary

December 19
Semester Final Exams at Saint Paul Seminary