

The Trumpeter

Newsletter of the Deacon Community of the Diocese of Sioux City
Vol 3, Issue 1: Easter, 2008

Easter Reflection

Every Lent, I dread the fasting of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. I anticipate too much the feeling of hunger, of weakness and irritability, to think it will be possible to fast for a whole day. In practice, of course, it's not too difficult, and the one meal we are allowed during the fast is all the more appreciated. Looking back, I wonder what I feared; looking ahead, I fear too much to wonder.

What this means, of course, is that I am too attached to my own appetite. Eating is hardly a sinful matter (though gluttony is); but even in something so mundane, the temptation to put oneself first is present. Precisely because food is so mundane and secure in our lives, we don't think about how insidiously the worm of pride creeps in. But pride is there, the pride which puts my own self, my own needs, my own appetites above those of others, especially the poor (in every sense, not merely fiscal) in whom Christ calls me to serve Him.

We need to fast for just this reason. I especially need to fast, for just this reason. I look forward to a day when I can love the goodness of good food (which is a divine gift, to draw us to Him) without loving myself pridefully in eating it. But I know I won't get there by myself. Left to my own devices, I will fast just enough to dread fasting more; I will lament my self-attachment, but not act to change it. I need the spur of repentance, of Lent all year round, to force me to rely only on the grace of our Lord to heal me. "When I am weak, then I am strong," as St. Paul says, because in weakness I turn to Christ, whose strength will bear me up, instead of trying to fend for myself, by myself.

St. Paul also says constantly that "Christ's Law is spiritual." Physical appetite for food is only a small step in the direction of Christ-like perfection of selfless love. As we enter the inner sanctuary of our year on this Holy Thursday, we need to reflect again on what else we are attached to, that holds us back from the perfect weakness of loving Christ absolutely, in Himself and in His members. This, too, we need to fast from, to be weaned from, in order to grow up to the "solid meat" of faith.

Especially as those called to make manifest in the world Christ's *diakonia*, we need to hold ourselves to the perfect model He gives. Holiness is contagious, and the best service to the world is the simple presence of radically holy people, who love Christ without reservation, even at the cost of their own lives.

May the blessings of this Passiontide fill each of you with the desire for a more profound, more complete love of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Day of Reflection

We look forward to seeing you all again in Early on Saturday, April 5. In brief, the schedule for the day is this:

8:00 – Deacon Council meeting

9:00 – fellowship

9:30 – Morning Prayer with Bishop Nickless in the church

10:00 – David Lopez, on the General Instruction for the Liturgy of the Hours

11:00 – Fr. David Hemann, on music in liturgy in general, and the Liturgy of the Hours in particular.

12:00 (approx) – lunch

Fr. Hemann may be planning to share a little of his own music with us as well.

Formation News

Also on April 5, Bishop Nickless will celebrate with us the Rite of Lector for one Candidate, Verne Burke; and the Rite of Acolyte for four Candidates: Butch Stone, Bill Black, Gary Schon, and David Brown. These four now also anticipate their ordination to the Diaconate on October 4 (this date was announced last fall). They will be undertaking a Liturgical Practicum and Homiletics class this summer. The pre-ordination retreat is tentatively scheduled for August 14-17 at Broom Tree retreat center.

Verne and the remaining five Candidates (Rick Roder, Bruce Chartier, David Lopez, Steve Twiselton, and Darwin Messerly) will continue in formation. We will be looking to schedule the Rite of Acolyte for this group following the next academic year. Their ordination Mass would follow six months after that; very tentatively, following Easter (April 4) of 2010.

Finally, we had one Candidate, Mark Westrich, who left formation this year to marry. We wish Mark and Laurie every blessing.

Our Aspirant class has done very well this year, and we are looking forward to their continued growth in the future. Please keep all these men and their families in your prayers as we all journey toward the Kingdom.

Summer Retreat

Just a reminder that our community's annual retreat is scheduled for June 20-22 at St. Benedict's retreat center in Schuyler, NE. We certainly hope that everyone will be able to make it. We did avoid having the priestly ordinations fall on the same weekend this year; that will take place the following Saturday (June 28).

If you are not planning to come, please let Dcn Tim or David know this by May 9, so that reservations (and budgets) can be confirmed.

Prayer Requests

Deacon Bud Hogan is out of the hospital and apparently doing much better than last week. He is resting comfortably at home. Keep him in prayer for continued health and peace, and in thanksgiving for the mercy of God.

Please continue to pray for each other, and all our families. Pray for Bishop Nickless and all our priests, especially our newest ones. Pray for all those in formation for Holy Orders.

If you have prayers to request, please don't hesitate to send them to Dcn Tim or David; we'll send them out via the prayer chain, and in the newsletter.

Notable Dates

March 29 – Beth Karpuk's birthday

April 7 – Mike Stover's birthday

April 11 – Bud Hogan, Donnie Kunkel, and Fr. Armand's ordination (1981)

April 19 – Ron Pietz's birthday

April 27 – Bob and Maureen Lenz's anniversary

April 28 – Don Kunecke's ordination (1974)

April 30 – Ann Hand's birthday

May 5 – Jeff Gallagher, birthday

May 10 – Tim and Sue Murphy, anniversary

May 16 – Bud Weiler, deceased

May 20 – Madonna Kunecke, deceased

May 22 – Mark and Dawn Prosser, anniversary

May 23 – Gerry Bertrand, Ron Pietz, Larry Sitzman, Tony Reuter, and Bob Wiskus, ordination (1992)

May 24 – Bob Lenz, Joe Straub, Louis Westendorf, ordination

May 25 – Fred Karpuk, ordination

May 26 – Gerry Streit, Jary Lester, ordination

May 30 – Tom Morgan, Tim Murphy, Eldon Sullivan, ordination (1998); Greg Sampson, ordination (1992)

May 31 – Doris Weiler, deceased