

**The Trumpeter: Volume 3, Issue 4 (#14): October-November 2008**

*The Newsletter of the Deacon Community of the Diocese of Sioux City*

**News and Notes:**

May the blessings of our Lord and Servant Jesus Christ fill the hearts of you and yours. May our service to Christ's littlest ones never be obstructed by our own failings and weakness. I hope everyone is having a good Fall.

Fall Day of Reflection – Saturday, November 1, in Early. We will begin with Mass with Bishop Nickless for the Solemnity of All Saints, at 9:15 am. (You're responsible for Morning Prayer on your own.) From 10:30 to noon, we will have two presentations. Maureen Lenz and Sue Murphy have organized a session for wives, with Peg Scheidt from St. Anthony's in Carroll. For the deacons, Adam Schwend from the Office of Worship will lead a session on liturgy and diaconal identity. Lunch and social time will follow. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Our Spring Day of Reflection is scheduled for March 28, 2009.

Deacons For Life – We all know how important it is to continue to work for the defense of life. Our pro-life efforts in the past twenty years have had a significant impact. Parental notification laws, waiting periods, and similar limits, up to the ban on partial-birth abortions, have all contributed to a slow, steady decline in the rate of abortion. The concerted efforts of counseling and caring for the women and families contemplating such a choice have also borne great fruit. Still other efforts have helped to prevent new laws permitting euthanasia and to encourage stem-cell research that does not violate the dignity of human embryos (by using other sources of stem cells, such as bone marrow, umbilical cord and placental tissues). Despite everything arrayed against it, the pro-life movement has made a great difference. I think it's fairly significant, then, that one of the key pillars of the pro-life movement, Priests for Life, is organizing a new branch: Deacons for Life. If you haven't seen it already, take a look at the new website, [www.deaconsforlife.org](http://www.deaconsforlife.org). I encourage all of us to discern carefully if we might be called to closer involvement in such a worthy organization.

Continuing Formation – The Pontifical College Josephinum has a program of distance learning classes available for deacons and wives, about which I have talked previously. This year, two of their Spring classes are being offered at a significant discount. Normal tuition is, if I recall correctly, \$525. Other classes are also available; see their website, <http://www.pcj.edu/distance/index.html>, for more information.

**PA-868-DE Pastoral Counseling for the Deacon: \$295.00**

Pastoral care is part of the daily life of every priest and deacon. Pastoral counseling incorporates additional theories into the equation. Deacons will feel more comfortable as they offer pastoral care to their parishioners when they have these additional insights in mind. While professional pastoral counseling is best performed by those with specific degrees and certification in Pastoral Counseling, this course serves as an introduction to the underlying fundamentals of pastoral counseling, and demonstrates good pastoral care practices using specific case scenarios. While this course does not lead to licensure, it serves as a useful vehicle for deacons to acquire basic skills and an appreciation of pastoral counseling. Topics Include:

- What is Pastoral Counseling?

- Advanced Challenging Skills
- The Spiritual Dimension
- Advanced Action Planning Skills
- Basic Counseling Mistakes
- Scripture, Prayer & Intervention
- Structure of Pastoral Counseling
- A Model for Pastoral Counseling
- Basic Listening Skills
- Advanced Listening Skills
- Pastoral Counseling in Relation to Other Counseling Methods
- Professionalism

**PA 883 DE Pastoral Care of Marriage and Family \$295.00**

Pope John Paul II, writing in *Familiaris Consortio*, has said:, "No plan for organized pastoral work at any level must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral area of the family." Families should be the first communities of evangelization, yet we often encounter families in crisis. This course provides strategies and information which Deacons may use to craft appropriate pastoral responses to a number of difficult situations. It is designed to focus on the pastoral aspects of ministry with families and thus focuses more on marriage preparation and preservation, and less on "wedding planning" or Tribunal matters. It is particularly well grounded in Church teaching, especially the dignity of marriage, the marital embrace, and the family. Topics include:

- Family Life
- Cohabitation and Marriage Preparation
- Marriage & Family Finances
- Understanding Contraception
- Marriage Preparation
- Natural Family Planning
- Mixed Marriages
- Family, Parenting & Chastity Education
- Domestic Violence
- Social Aspects of Abortion
- Theology of the Body
- Married Spirituality

Formation News – We are all very pleased and joyful to welcome our four newest brothers, ordained this month on the Feast of St. Francis. We currently have ten aspirants and candidates in formation, with a third cohort assembling, to begin their formation in the Fall of 2009. Initial responses have been fairly good, and we have two more Inquiry sessions still to go. I am pleased to have about 8 strong applicants so far. I'm still hoping to reach my goal of a class of 12 admitted Aspirants. If you know anyone who might be a good possibility, please encourage them to consider it. The deadline for applications this year is January 15, 2009, so even if they miss the October inquiries, there is still time to meet with me and begin an application.

Mundelein Psalter – The formation community has agreed to start learning how to sing Lauds and Vespers. We intend to make use of the Mundelein Psalter this year, for two compelling

reasons. First, it is simple and elegant in style. Second, it is the only Psalter available in English that uses the same unmodified text (the "typical edition") as the Breviary. At least on the more solemn occasions, when we gather as a Deacon Community and it is appropriate to sing our prayer together, I hope we might make it easier by sharing a common Psalter we can all expect to use. Samples of the tones and hymns are available here:

(<http://www.usml.edu/liturgicalinstitute/projects/psalter/psalter%20audio%20files.htm>).

Also, I hope that Fr. Hemann and I will be able to put together a recording of a full Office of Lauds and of Vespers, so that each of us can have something complete to learn from by hearing. We have used this Psalter already on, I think, two days in the last two years, most recently last Spring when Fr. Hemann led our Day of Reflection. It's gone pretty well, and none of you have complained, so I dare to hope that we might do the same more regularly, and improve the depth and passion of our praise to God with more support and time to learn.

### **Prayer requests:**

Remember to keep our brother Bob Wiskus, and his wife Judi, in your prayers. Bob's health continues to be up and down. Remember also the repose of the soul of Lyle Rosburg, father of Deacon Ray Rosburg; and the grief and needs of his family. Please continue to support with diligent prayer our new "St. Francis" deacons, and those in formation, and an increase in our common vocation.

### **Bishop Nickless's Homily from the October 4 Ordination Mass:**

Homily for Deacon Ordination +Bishop R. Walker Nickless

Today, the Church throughout the world celebrates one of the most beloved and best known saints, St. Francis of Assisi. He lived from 1182-1226 in the small town of Assisi, Italy. Pope Benedict XV said of him: "the greatest image of Our Lord that has ever been." St. Francis, in a letter found in today's Office of Readings, seems to sum up for us the fullest meaning of what we do today as we ordain four men to the Order of Deacon. This is the same order St. Francis received, centering on preaching the word of God and serving especially the poor. St. Francis writes: "We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather we must be simple, humble and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God's sake."

Simple, humble and pure. Servants of all. This is a beautiful description of the role of a deacon in the Church. After many years of preparation, (at times I'm sure you each wondered, will it ever end? will I ever be ordained?) the day has come for your ordination. You, like St. Francis, are to be an icon of Christ, reflecting his presence in all you do with your family, at your jobs, in the parishes at which you serve and to every person you meet. Our prayer for you is that you be like the humble deacon St. Francis, brilliant images of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I have the privilege of administering to you the sacrament of Holy Orders. The external sign of this sacrament will be the solemn and silent moment when I impose my hands on each of your heads. This is a sign that you are consecrated, which means you are set apart from the rest of the community. Set apart, not as an honor or as something to hold over others that you are better than they are, but consecrated and set apart for the service to the Lord. You are set aside for God's purpose. He has called you and you have responded. Just as the Lord called Jeremiah to be a prophet, as we heard in the first reading from scripture, so too, are you called to exercise the

office of deacon. Jeremiah protested saying he was too young, too inexperienced, that he was not prepared as he should be in the work of the Lord, not holy enough. These thoughts may be your thoughts as well. My beloved brothers, listen again to the consoling words of the Lord: "To whomever I send you, you shall go, whatever I command you to speak, you shall speak Have no fear before them, because I am with you."

The Lord promises to be with you in your ministry of word and service. Do not be afraid. As deacons you will be called upon to pray every day for the needs of the people of God and indeed the people of the entire world. This prayer, done primarily through Morning and Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of Hours is absolutely essential if you are to do the work of the Lord in a worthy manner.

As deacons you are to be ministers of the Word, to preach that word, not only in your homilies from the pulpits at Church, but also in the words and example of your daily lives. Reflect upon and ponder the word of God as found in Holy Scripture so that you can boldly witness to the faith. If you do not, you will have nothing to say.

In prayer and scripture you gradually come to know the Lord more and more and thus become his intimate friends. In the gospel heard from St. John today, Jesus says he wants you to be his friends. He, like any good friend, desires to share so much with you. He shares his love, so that you too can share that love with others, especially the poor, the needy, the forgotten. It is only when you stay close to the Lord in prayer that you will have anything to share with others. As deacons, you are called as well to be servants. Just as in the early Church, men were chosen to serve the needs of those neglected and forgotten, so too are you chosen through prayer and the laying on of hands, to be like Stephen, Philip, Nicanor, Nicholas of Antioch and Francis to proclaim the gospel of Christ.

You will also have the privilege to assist the priest at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. You will share the Precious Blood of Christ with the faithful at communion. Your service at the altar is of utmost importance. May your humble service at the altar add dignity and importance to the action of the Holy Spirit that enables Christ to be truly present to us.

My brothers and sons, you are ordained on the first Saturday of the month of October. We pray that Mary, the Mother of God, watch over and protect your ministry as deacons. All of her life pointed to the importance of Jesus, the Savior of the world. With Mary's help may you too give birth to the presence of the Lord in our midst. Our world desperately needs signs of hope and faith and love. I have every confidence that you, by your very lives, can be those signs for us.

Finally, today is another blessed day for the Diocese of Sioux City. Four of our own, along with their wives and family, rejoice in the goodness of our God. In the name of the Church, I take this moment to thank the wives and families of the new deacons for all the sacrifices, support and prayers they offered for our deacons. Especially, you wives have walked with your husbands through many years of study, formation and discernment. Thank you for being there and for them. Congratulations and welcome to our new deacons.

Beloved brothers and sisters: since these our sons who are your relatives and friends are now to be advanced to the Order of deacons, consider carefully the nature of the rank in the Church to which they are about to be raised.

Strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, they will help the Bishop and his priests in the ministry of the word, of the altar, and of charity, showing themselves to be servants to all. As ministers of the altar, they will proclaim the Gospel, prepare the sacrifice, and distribute the Lord's Body and Blood to the faithful.

Furthermore, it will be their duty, at the Bishop's direction, to exhort believers and unbelievers alike and to instruct them in holy doctrine. They will preside over public prayer, administer Baptism, assist at and bless Marriages, bring Viaticum to the dying, and conduct funeral rites.

Consecrated by the laying on of hands that comes down to us from the Apostles and bound more closely to the service of the altar, they will perform works of charity in the name of the Bishop or the pastor. With the help of God, they are to go about all these duties in such a way that you will recognize them as disciples of him who came not to be served, but to serve.

Now, dear sons, you are to be raised to the Order of the diaconate. The Lord has set an example that just as he himself has done, you also should do.

As deacons, that is, as ministers of Jesus Christ, who came among his disciples as one who served, do the will of God from the heart: serve the people in love and joy as you would the Lord. Since no one can serve two masters, look upon all defilement and avarice as serving false gods.

Like those once chosen by the Apostles for the ministry of charity, you should be men of good reputation, filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Firmly rooted and grounded in faith, you are to show yourselves chaste and beyond reproach before God and man, as is proper for the ministers of Christ and the stewards of God's mysteries. Never allow yourselves to be turned away from the hope offered by the Gospel. Now you are not only hearers of this Gospel but also its ministers. Holding the mystery of faith with a clear conscience, express by your actions the word of God which your lips proclaim, so that the Christian people, brought to life by the Spirit, may be a pure offering accepted by God. Then on the last day, when you go out to meet the Lord you will be able to hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

### **Notable Dates for November:**

4 – Ron and Judy Forrest, anniversary

8 – Dick and Jo Billings, anniversary

13 – Jim Sands, ordination (1993)

20 – Jeff Gallagher, Bing MacDonald, Jerry Riecks, Tom Lang, ordination (1982)

21 – Bud Hogan, birthday

22 – Charles Benson, deceased

27 – Mavis Black, birthday

29 – Ron and Marlene Pietz, anniversary