

# THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE  
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Published quarterly by the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Office of the Permanent Diaconate 2401 Lake Park Drive Smyrna, GA 30080 O 404-920-7325 F 404.920.7326

Vol.8 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Autumn 2011

“...Your light must shine before men so that they may see the goodness in your acts...” Matthew 5:16

## From the Director



My Dear Brothers,

Growing up in the Midwest, Labor Day always marked the end of summer and back to school. Now our children are back in school in early August and summer is already a fading memory. How time flies!

Much is happening here as well. We are working on the final arrangements for the Deacon and Wives retreat September 23-25 at Simpsonwood. On Friday afternoon 9/23 from 1-3PM we will have a session regarding the new ministry, “embrace”, that Archbishop Gregory has

blessed and given to the deacon community to launch. More about the ministry is included in this issue. I hope that many of you will be able to attend both the workshop and the retreat.

Our new **Deacon Personnel Board** is up and running. One of the main functions of the Board is to review deacon assignments. To help accomplish this we are gathering information from all of the clergy in the archdiocese. You will see the deacon’s survey soon.

The **Deacon Assistance Fund Review Committee** has been established. Requests can be made through my office.

I just returned from an amazing trip to **World Youth Day** with Bishop Zarama in Madrid. The gathering was a powerful reminder of how hungry our young people are to hear the Good News and to have that Good News presented in a way that touches their hearts. In a few simple sentences the Holy Father asked the young people to be attentive to God’s call in their lives. All of the loud music, lights, and fireworks couldn’t compete and didn’t matter when the Blessed Sacrament was processed onto the altar and two million people fell to their knees in silent prayer. For twenty minutes we all worshiped our Creator in the flesh. I am reminded that we, as deacons, share in the ministry and responsibility of bringing God’s message of love to all of His people. We can do that with our words and in our actions but we do it best when it’s done simply and reverently and relevantly!

Know that I am here to serve you and that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Please keep our entire community in prayer!

Sincerely in Christ,

**Deacon Dennis**

[ddormer@archatl.com](mailto:ddormer@archatl.com) 404-885-7407

### In this Issue

Click on these links:

[Associate Directors Desk](#)

[embrace](#)

[Breaking News!](#)

[The Call of the Diaconate](#)

[Aquinas Center](#)

[Distance Learning](#)

[Homily Help](#)

[Continuing Education](#)

[Spiritual Direction Training](#)

[Precana Workshop Info](#)

[Important Dates](#)

[Deacon Wives Info](#)

[USCCB Q & A](#)

[Pray For Us](#)

[Q's & A's](#)

[Help Wanted](#)

[Deacon Polo Shirt](#)

[In Need of Deacons](#)

visit us at <http://www.archatl.com/vocations/deacons/>

## FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Brothers in Christ:

I hope that each of you has had a great summer and that you had some time for a little rest and relaxation. The summer months have remained pretty busy for the great group of volunteers who assist us in the evaluation of applicants to the Aspirancy year. The priests, deacons, religious and laity who assist in this process devote substantial time and energy to the task. I am so very grateful for their dedication and prayerful service to the Archdiocese.

Over the past few months we have been working on the development of a Post-Ordination continuing education program. The objectives of the program are to provide affordable and interesting content, at times that Deacons can attend, using local resources. This program will be comprised of two components; full day class sessions and regular classes offered in tandem with the formation classes the Candidates attend.

The full day sessions will be scheduled two or three times per year and will take place at the new Chancery office. On August 20<sup>th</sup> we conducted the first of these sessions on Deacons and Social Justice Ministry. Over 60 Deacons joined the Candidates for this session. The next offering of this nature will be Deacons and Marriage Preparation on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This session will feature a subject matter expert from outside of the Archdiocese and will include how to go about preparing couples for the Sacrament, issues that may arise due to the age or cultural background of the couple, classes offered to assist that preparation, evaluation instruments like Prepare & Enrich and FOCCUS, Canonical issues and of course the paperwork. The objective is to create effective models of preparation and make our Diaconate community aware of all of the resources that are available. We are planning the 2012 full day sessions and will provide more information as those are firmed up.

The second component, regular classes will begin in January of 2012. With the implementation of the new curriculum specified by the National Directory, there are a number of courses offered in Diaconate formation that many Deacons have not been exposed to. The plan for these classes is simple. On our regular formation days we have instructors who come to the St. Stephen Center to teach our Candidates. We are asking three of those instructors to offer the course they are teaching exact same course to Deacons, DRE's and Catechists. The only difference between the course the Candidates participate in and the continuing education course that you may take is that you will not be required to take any tests or write any papers! These hour long classes will take place in the morning on each of the 18 formation dates (generally twice per month). Information about the classes to be offered and advance registration will be available soon.

I hope that you will be able to take advantage of some of these continuing education opportunities. They will help us fulfill our ongoing educational obligation and also provide another way for us to meet and get to know our brother Deacons. Your wives are always welcome to participate in these classes as well.

As always, thank you for the support and prayers you have provided for the men in formation and all of those involved in forming them.

You remain in my prayers.

In Christ's Service,



Associate Director of Formation [SSwope@archat1.com](mailto:SSwope@archat1.com)

[return to top](#)

## **Breaking News:** **Deacons to be Transferred!!**

### **Diaconate Personnel Board to Make Recommendations!!!!**

We thought that would get your attention...

Archbishop Gregory has created a Diaconate Personnel Board for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. This Board has a wide range of responsibilities including but not limited to:

1. Gathering information from Pastors regarding the number of Deacons needed at our parishes;
2. Assessing how content Deacons are in their current assignments;
3. Determining if Deacons are willing and able to take on dual assignments;
4. Determining which Deacons are looking for or would not object to a transfer;
5. Addressing issues that arise related to Deacon assignments;
6. Recommending to the Archbishop Deacon transfers which will meet the ever evolving needs of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Over the summer, the Personnel Board conducted a survey of the Pastors and Priests and found that there is an immediate need for at least 30 additional Deacons. Some parishes have no Deacons at all, while others have enough or even more Deacons than are needed.

So that the Diaconate Personnel Board can make assignment recommendations to our Archbishop, it is now conducting a Survey of Deacons to gather the information it requires. We ask that all Deacons participate in this Survey by going to [2011 Deacon Survey](#) and taking a few minutes to answer the questions. Please complete the Survey by **October 15, 2011**.

The Diaconate Personnel Board will provide its recommendations to the Archbishop before the end of the year. New assignments will be made in February of each year, concurrent with the Ordination of new Permanent Deacons.

Completing this Survey will allow the Board to know your desires as it formulates its recommendations. The Board will assume that Deacons that do not complete the Survey are available for a dual assignment or a transfer to a parish within a reasonable geographic area.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

### **DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE DEACON?**

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate has requested that the pastors of the Archdiocese submit the names of men who may have a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate. If you know of a man in your parish, who is deeply involved in the life of the parish or community and may have a vocation to the Diaconate, please discuss him with your Pastor. Your Pastor may easily submit names of men to our office by going to the following link: [Inquirer Form](#). Men submitted by pastors will be invited to attend four Information/Inquiry sessions (with their wives) so that they may gain a greater understanding of the Diaconate and possibly apply for admission to the Aspirancy Year of formation. Please take the time to consider who in your parish may have a vocation as a deacon, even if he doesn't know it yet! Then meet with your pastor to discuss the man and provide your pastor with information on submitting his name. Many men are called; some just have yet to hear that call! In helping a man to hear that call we serve God, him and the people of God

[return to top](#)

## **embrace**

Our Archdiocese of Atlanta's Mission Statement states to love and serve others. We have a great need in our diocese to minister to families suffering and experiencing great loss through losing a child from miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death. These families need our **embrace** of love and service. To address this great need a new ministry has been established within the archdiocese called "**embrace**". The mission of **embrace** is to **embrace** families who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. Embrace is an act of holding these families close. Embrace is surrounding these families with help and support. **Embrace** is an act of helping these families embrace the loss of something so precious and continue on with life.

Sadly, miscarriages are a very common occurrence. Sources vary, but many estimate that approximately 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriages. There are about 4.4 million confirmed pregnancies in the U.S. every year. 900,000 to 1 million of those end in pregnancy losses every year. 500,000 end in miscarriage, about 26,000 end in stillbirth, and about 60,000 end in infant death. This proves the great need that a lot of families need our **embrace**.

The first goal of the **embrace** ministry is to provide support, guidance, education, and comfort to families on dealing with the loss of a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. The second goal of the **embrace** ministry is to offer support and education for families dealing with infertility.

To find out more about embrace ministry and upcoming events please check out our website [www.embrace.com](http://www.embrace.com). Look for us on Facebook or email us at [embrace@archatl.com](mailto:embrace@archatl.com).

### Upcoming Events for **embrace**:

Starting on the evening of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, **embrace** will offer a support group for families at the Archdiocese Catholic Center the third Thursday of every month. This support group will offer an opportunity for families to share with each other and support one another. The **embrace** support group will also provide opportunities to join together in prayer and hear from experts on dealing with their experiences.

October 15<sup>th</sup> is the [National Infant Loss Remembrance Day](#) or click [here](#) for more information. This is a day when parents come together and be **embraced** by the love and support from their friends and families. This would be a day to reflect on the loss yet **embrace** the love. At 3:00 PM on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, **embrace** ministry will be hosting a remembrance walk and prayer service in and around the Catholic Center. The walk is open to parents and their families and friends. The walk will end with a prayer service and a butterfly release to remember all our angels.

d.

[return to top](#)

## **THE CALL OF THE DIACONATE IN THE SERVICE OF JUSTICE**

*The National Institute for Continuing Education  
Wednesday, July 30, 2003*

*Reverend Timothy A. Gadziala, J.C.L.*

I would like to open my remarks first with a mention of a heartfelt thanks to be able to speak to you today; I am honored and feel very privileged to share some insight into the essence of the call of the Diaconate, specifically as one in the service of justice. For the last eight years of ministry in the priesthood, I have had the joy in serving God's people in the Archdiocese of Atlanta by teaching, specifically, in teaching those Diaconate candidates and their wives who are in formation to become a herald of the Gospel as a Deacon.

When I was a seminarian at Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, I heard of the life of a former seminarian who graduated in 1963. A newly ordained priest from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, he dedicated his priesthood for the glory of God and spent his entire priesthood in the service of all. His name was Father Stan Rother. Fr. Henri J. M. Nouwen wrote a book in 1985 in honor of the dedicated life of this holy priest and martyr.<sup>1</sup> In his book, Love in a Fearful Land: A Guatemalan Story, Nouwen recalls Fr. Rother's devoted love for the Mayan people, and his murder in Santiago Atitlan on July 28, 1981 — now, just over 22 years ago. Fr. Rother, with the permission of his bishop, had gone to Guatemala to serve the Mayan people in the highlands on the shores of Lake Atitlan.

Fr. Rother's death has become legend and an inspiration of service for me while I was at the Mount as a seminarian; but more importantly, his life story is a powerful witness for the people whom he served; his life is especially powerful for the Diaconate because the vocation of the Deacon is above all, one of dedicated service. While his family chose to have Fr. Rother's body buried in Oklahoma, they permitted his heart and some of his blood to remain in a grave in Santiago Atitlan. That gravesite has become a place of prayer and reverence as parishioners continue to come and venerate him, calling Fr. Rother, "A'plas," meaning, "Saint." The stone that covers the grave reads: "Padre Stanley Francisco Rother, Sacerdote Martir — No hay amor mas grande que este: dar la vida por sus amigos (Jn 15:13) [Fr. Stanley Francis Rother, Priest and Martyr — There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends]." Fr. Rother's love of people, his appreciation of the human dignity of life, and his call for justice for the oppressed cost him his life. His humble life of simplicity as well as his martyrdom stands in great contrast to the secular humanistic world of over-abundance and greed in which we live today; Fr. Rother's life is indeed an inspiration to us who are ordained who labor in the vineyard of the Lord, sowing seeds of his love, laboring day and night in fidelity to a life of service, without knowing when the seeds planted will begin to grow (Mk 4). We may not be asked to give our lives to martyrdom for the love of people, but his witness is a powerful reminder of our need to be faithful to God's call and God's people whom we are called to serve in His vineyard.

In reflecting deeply on the life of Fr. Rother, one picks up a sense of fidelity and love in his dedicated witness to God's love as he serves the spiritual and temporal needs of His people. Some months before his death, Fr. Rother returned home to Oklahoma because of danger to his life. Though his name was on a hit list, his heart led him back to Guatemala to the people whom he loved. At the time, the country of Guatemala was in rebellion and the government began taking it out on the Catholic Church. Given the low wages that were paid coupled with the very few who were excessively rich, severe corruption in government policy became widespread and a disregard for the rights and dignity of the human person became evident. This corruption resulted in the bad distribution of food, wealth and the widespread apathy and discontent among the local people. The Church seemed to be the only haven left in the corrupt society, and, it was the Church that the local people sought for counsel, solace and holiness. In particular, the Church was the only institutional force that attempted to change the situation, protecting the dignity of the human person and calling out courageously the right to a just wage in the society.

Near the end of his life, Fr. Rother wrote to a newly ordained:

The reality is that we are in danger. But we don't know when or what form the government will use to further repress the Church. For a month or so now, all classes and group meetings have been cancelled. We are working in smaller groups. My associate and myself are seen less on the street, and almost never leave the rectory at night. The tactic of the government has been to kidnap those they think are leaders, torture and then kill them. Two days ago a young man from the neighboring parish was taken in the middle of the night. He is a cousin of one of our nuns. He is not expected to be found alive [...] Take care of your priest hood. "Service" has to be our motto. I have heard that a certain group of priests in Oklahoma are expecting to be served, rather than to serve. That is one accusation I don't want [...] pray for me.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, Love in a Fearful Land: A Guatemalan Story (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1985) 1-116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 41, 63

## THE BEACON AUTUMN 2011

Like priests, the same can be said for deacons — we are called to serve, not to be served. In our ordination, we are called to herald the Gospel of Christ. In another letter, Fr. Rother wrote his Archbishop,

If I get a direct threat or am told to leave, then I will go. But if it is my destiny that I should give my life here, then so be it [...] I don't want to desert these people, and that is what will be said, even after all these years. There is still a lot of good that can be done under the circumstances [...] pray for me that I may continue to serve as best I can in the reality where I find myself.<sup>3</sup>

Fr. Rother continued to serve God's people courageously and with fortitude, even in his death at the hands of the Guatemalan government. He died of two gunshot wounds to the head, fired by three men who entered his rectory at 12:30am on July 28, 1981.

The witness of Fr. Rother challenges us who are ordained and called to the service of our sisters and brothers for the greater glory of God to take seriously God's call to love as Christ loves in all situations. Fr. Rother's life ought to awaken within each of our hearts the heart of Christ whereby Christ's love truly dwells and lives ever-present within our hearts and especially our voices. It is this voice that heralds the Gospel of Christ: it is this voice that loves the least of God's people and proclaims the right ordering of relationships in society and in our world today and, it is this voice that is especially uniquely entrusted to the charism and the vocational call of the Deacon. Recall the words of the Bishop at your ordination, "Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you now are: believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." What would our vocation be like if we preached what we truly practiced?

The vocation of the Deacon is to herald the Gospel of Christ in a unique way. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote of the essence of the Diaconate in Lumen Gentium. In part, the Council taught, Strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests, [the Deacon] serves the People of God in the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity [...] dedicated to duties of charity and administration, let the deacons be mindful of the admonition of Blessed Polycarp: 'Be merciful, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all.' [...] For this reason, the Diaconate [is to be] restored as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy (LG 28-29).

Having recalled these words from the Council Fathers, it is important to keep in mind that the restoration of the Diaconate is a permanent institution of the Church, just as are the Orders of the Episcopacy and the Presbyterate. The Deacon journeys amid the People of God as part of the Hierarchy of the Church, ordained for humble service in the image of perfect charity and justice. The Church, called the "Lumen Gentium" — the light to all the nations — is one whereby the Deacon serves in an integral role by heralding the light of Christ through his service to justice and charity.

Of interest is that the Diaconate serves the People of God in the liturgy, of the word and of charity. The Diaconate was not restored because of the shortage of priests — implying that the deacon was to fulfill certain roles that were at one time given solely to priests; no, the Council fathers stressed that the Diaconate was restored because it is of the essence of the teachings of the Apostolic Church, mindful of the great saintly deacons, Stephen and Lawrence in the early church. The essence of the Deacon is to be a man of prayer — at the service of Jesus Christ. This service is visibly observed at the liturgy, at Mass where the Deacon assists the Bishops and Priests in proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the just word, and preparing the altar. The vocation of the Diaconate is to be the herald of the Gospel — the very Word of God. In other words, the Deacon is to become a spiritual vessel whereby the Word of God can truly dwell not just conformed by the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; but also, like the priest and bishop — although uniquely different and distinct, the Deacon is configured to Jesus Christ as a Servant of the Servants of God by virtue of ordination. Finally, the essence of the Deacon is that he be the embodiment of Christian Charity — that as a servant of charity, the Deacon not only by his word, but also by his actions exhibits the essence of love to all persons through the reality of his service to them.

The Diaconate, as individuals and as a body, occupies a wonderful presence in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ because the Deacon personifies the burning and abiding love (charity) of God as a humble servant, present as a real voice in the liturgy and as a real voice of Christian charity in society itself. Throughout the history of the Church, Our Lord has challenged men and women to go out to the ends of the world, proclaiming the Gospel. Now perhaps, since for two thousand years, the Church has gone out physically throughout the ends of the world, the greater challenge is to go to the ends of an individual's heart.

The just word of God is a kin to the burning bush that drew Moses to Mount Sinai, meaning that God's Word is that which is consumed but not exhausted. In the Jewish Mishnah, the only equivalent allegory to the burning bush is the human heart that envelopes love — true Godly charity is that which is consumed but never exhausted. Certainly then, the incarnate word of Jesus Christ fulfills and demonstrates the Father's love in the form of the suffering servant prophesied by Isaiah. The Deacon, therefore, has an unusual and unique opportunity to be a spiritual vessel whereby the living presence of the Word of God is not only preached in the liturgy, but also it is heralded by the servant Deacon through the medium of pure Christian charity. Thus, the Deacon has a unique vocation to herald the just word in the

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 45.

liturgy and in the society by making justice come alive in people's hearts and lives; therefore, the vocation of the Deacon embodies the perfect charity of Jesus Christ that always burns but is never truly exhausted as a servant to all.

Today, the moment to make present the just word has never been more opportune and more urgent. The recent United States Bishops administrative board's statement Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium<sup>4</sup> lists some of the signs of the times and challenges that face us as Church: in many of our cities in the United States a majority of our children have never seen the light of day in birth; indeed, 1.4 million children "are destroyed before birth every year." Twenty-five percent of our preschool children are growing up in poverty in a nation in which the stock market continues to rise and wealth continues to accumulate. Some of our schools have "become almost war zones," and we are shocked by violence of parents towards their children and of youth who find a certain kind of glee in killing and violence through their participation in gangs and in video games. Hatred and intolerance continue to plague our nation. While the economy continues to grow, the middle class is seemingly shrinking, leaving the gap between the rich and the poor to widen continuously.

Many families continue to be significantly impacted by poverty; this impact is cancerous, metastasizing to a lack of basic health care, inadequate housing, or even the loss of an entire way of life through the commercialization of basic jobs — such as that we are perceiving with the extinction of the traditional American farmer. Sensationalism, scandal in the highest echelons of government authority and power, and uncivil mannerism has replaced traditional virtues and circumvented the highest principles of truth, honesty and integrity. As an example, those who aspire for political office oftentimes spend more time focused on fundraising and the accompanying power that the office gives rather than concentrating on the message of political responsibility that truly represent the virtue and integrity that the elected office demands. This occurrence makes for a tragic sign of misplaced values and dehumanizing lifestyles.

Lastly, the sense of violence has truly numbed the American mindset to the basic dignity of the human person that has been given to us by God. There was once a time when people loved people and used things; now, it seems that people love things and use people. With the rise of materialism and consumerism, the American heart has become very heavy with things and burdens that are necessary to live up to the lifestyle desired. In other words, lost in the "instant gratification" mindset is the notion of sacrifice and healthy work. Human life has become cheap and readily expendable in the continuum from abortion to escaping life's traumas through alcohol or drug abuse. As a sign to this reality, the sacrament of marriage and family life has been cheapened by the notion of frequent and easy divorce, domestic violence, and in some states and countries (Canada), legalized homosexual marriages. In a larger framework, this violence has affected political systems and has not only justified the heinous crimes such as ethnic cleansing of the Jews by Nazi Germany in the Holocaust, but also the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and in Croatia, not to mention the silent holocaust of abortion. Where is the burning charity of Christ that is consumed but never exhausted? Why has not this love been evident in the Church through her ordained members? Has the burning light of Christ been reduced to a mere ember of coal, burning dimly in our society today?

At times though, the Church has not acted justly or heralded the Gospel in its fullness. For example, did you know that Rwanda's population is over sixty percent Catholic? If this is the case, how could disintegration of relationships in society and the respect for others collapse so quickly and tragically in the massive massacres in Rwanda? Recently, I came across an article written by a Catholic Bishop who recalled an article written by a Rwandan priest, who lamented the fact that the Church never confronted in any significant way the deep tribal divisions in Rwanda, even though on the surface the society seemed to be relatively calm. It took just the spark of a plane crash to initiate a human conflagration that still leaves the world stunned and somewhat numb even now. We should remind ourselves, as ordained members of the Church configured to Christ the Servant of all — we cannot rest on our laurels in our ministry, but rather, we must prophetically courageously address the need for building and strengthening relationships in the human society in our community.

Interestingly today is the "best of times and the worst of times" to paraphrase a "Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens. One could say that it is the best of times to live out our diaconal vocation as a humble servant configured to the work of charity and the proclamation of the Gospel; and, it is seemingly the worst of times to live out our pastoral call to holiness, given the many obstacles and pressures of our modern society. It is the best of times to herald the Gospel in our society given all the giftedness that is present in the service of God's word; however, it is seemingly the worst of times, because Christianity as a religion is viewed by many of the Post-Modern philosophies to be either outdated, over-tried, or only one of many human organizations given into scandal. In this way, it seems that Christianity has lost a sense of its purpose, mission and mystery in its ability to influence goodness in people. In the midst of the tension to make present and efficacious God's word as heralds of the Gospel, we are compelled to look at the plethora of writings and pastoral concerns made known by the Tradition of the Church so that the Holy Spirit may fan into flame the fire of His love amid the clergy who are to be bearers of the light of Christ amid our journey in this dark night.

---

<sup>4</sup> Administrative Board, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1999) 2.

## THE BEACON AUTUMN 2011

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of perhaps one of the greatest pastoral encyclicals written in the twentieth century concerning the vocation of the proclamation of the just word. Forty years ago, in April of 1963, now Blessed, Pope John XXIII wrote Pacem in teris. This encyclical was written in the context of a post World War II climate, the Cold War; specifically, the encyclical was published only five months after the Cuban missile crisis. This crisis consisted of a U.S. — Soviet confrontation in a terrifying test of wills that brought the world closer to a nuclear exchange than any other incident of the Cold War years.

Against that background, John XXIII's fervent plea for peace fell on receptive ears. "True and lasting peace among nations," wrote the Holy Father, "cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust. Violence does not beget peace, only more violence." Central to the encyclical was the vision of an international order supported by four great pillars — founded on **truth**, built upon **justice**, nurtured and animated by **charity**, and brought into effect under the auspices of **freedom** as John XXIII envisioned it.

Forty years later, this encyclical continues to be a remarkably timely document because of its grounding in natural law, its articulation of conception of the human dignity of each person, and the basic human rights in which each person is so endowed because of the individual's fundamental relationship with God. "Peace on earth — which man throughout the ages has so longed for and sought after — can never be established, never guaranteed, except by the diligent observance of the divinely established natural order of life." This encyclical serves as a Magna Charta for the protection and the promotion of the fundamental human rights of each and every person; and, it seeks to protect those individuals who are defenseless.

In an era of terrorism and nation states having weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — this promise is not enough; women and men of good will must act upon what they say they believe to be true. This encyclical was addressed to all men and women of good will — not just Catholics or Christians, but to all persons: young and old, black, brown, red and yellow, and white, as well as clerics and lay alike. Near its end, nevertheless, the document speaks directly to Catholics, calling on them to "take an active part in public life" and to "strive to influence [public institutions] effectively from within." In doing so, it provides powerful reinforcement to the idea of the lay apostolate in the secular world, as well as the role of the clergy in promoting this call. Specifically, the call of the Deacon is important because of his relationship to his domestic family, his secular work and his work within the Church. While not of the lay state, the Deacon can be of tremendous influence in the secular world given his connection to the civil society in his relationship to his family and secular work. In other words, the Deacon is to herald the Gospel of Christ as a humble servant of those who are directly affected against injustice and those who are defenseless.

The Deacon's call to herald the voice of the Gospel in the form of a servant is based similarly with John XXIII's vision of the four pillars that provide the basic foundation of Gospel living; as with national systems, the human person is built upon the virtues of truth, charity, justice and freedom. At times though, individuals do not act according to their true nature as children of God; rather, people act under impulse, giving into their own vices and selfish endeavors. In doing so, people do not love for the sake of love, but out of hedonistic tendencies, and thus, acting unjustly towards others, giving into thievery, racism and oppression. This behavior exemplifies that a person is not truly free rather; he or she is given into the slavery of sin, passion and selfish desire. It is of the essence of the Deacon to herald Christ into those situations that call for healing, all the while, serving in those programs that would affect everyone for the better.

Pope John Paul II has written three important encyclicals that concern the Challenge of the Church in dealing with the injustices in society, these writings are titled, Laborum Exercens in 1981, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis in 1987, and Centesimus Annus in 1991. In Laborum Exercens, the Holy Father honored the ninetieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum after his travels to Mexico and Africa. The context of this encyclical included the severe recessions in Europe and the United States; in addition, third world countries were suffering from a lack of trade reforms from first world countries, causing widespread poverty. Thus, the Pope reiterated major themes of the concern for the poor, unemployment, sinful social structures, and the right to a just wage. John Paul II argued from Scripture that through the work mandate to "subdue the earth," humanity shares in God's creative action in shaping society; thus, work is a source of deep spirituality. In the process of work, women and men transform themselves, becoming more like the Creator in the creative exercise of their own gifts, talents and energies. This not only can deepen their own sense of dignity, taught John Paul II, but it also emphasizes the importance of organizing the workplace and the entire economy in ways that "harmonize with the genuine good of the human race and allow people as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it" (LE 26).

In writing Sollicitudo Rei Socialis in 1987, John Paul II honored his predecessor, Pope Paul VI in his 1967 encyclical "The Development of Peoples" building on the need to continue to foster development of all peoples. John Paul II wrote this encyclical while the two major powers — the United States and the Soviet Union — continued to spend massive amounts of money in the arms race while debt, unemployment, recession and inflation marked the economies of both the developed and the so-called developing nations. John Paul II contrasts the hopes of Paul VI's hopes for improvement with the worsening realities of underdevelopment, poverty and neglect among the poorest

## THE BEACON AUTUMN 2011

nations. He attributes the causes of this happening to the first world countries who, while neglecting the poor, have engaged themselves for the sake of their personal interests which lead to a perversion of investment and the “colonizing” of third world countries to further their selfish causes. Against this backdrop, John Paul II argued that authentic human development must be integral, social and respectful for the rights and dignity of persons and nation states; in this way, first world countries have a duty of solidarity as a moral response to the sinful structures of economies that are rooted in a thirst for profit and power.

In Centessimus Annus, the Pope highlighted the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rerum Novarum and, restated his vision of hope for the poor. The Pontiff articulated his hope amid the collapse of the Soviet Union and amid the first gulf war in Kuwait. In celebrating the hundredth year since Rerum Novarum, the Holy Father aptly concluded the first century of modern Catholic Social teaching by endorsing and building upon the key ideas of Leo XIII. John Paul II highlighted the key ideas of Leo XIII: social teaching as evangelization, the rights and dignity of workers, private property and the common good, the role of the state, limited by subsidiarity but pursuing solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor (CA 5-11). With Leo XIII, John Paul II underscored socialism’s fatal flaws: atheistic anthropology, class struggle, and state control of productive means (CA 13-15). The Pope warned against a selfish capitalistic state, whereby people and their work were exploited through the personal greed of nations. He acknowledged the free market efficiency in the context of its limits and failures (CA 34) and called for the reduction or the canceling of the third world debt (CA 35). The Pontiff rejected consumerism and implored countries to protect natural and human ecology (CA 36-38). He concluded the encyclical with hope, stating, “Authentic democracy” was based on law and human rights such as life, family, and freedom.

What does this have to do with the role of proclaiming the just word in society? Not only on the level of the Papacy must the Church act, but also on the local level. The clergy of each particular Church must do its part to call attention to the injustices of the local people. Specifically, the Deacon is a perfect icon of charity and service as he is able to herald the Gospel at the “grass roots” level through his involvement in programs that help alleviate poverty and prejudices.

Being called a herald in today’s world is not just a daunting task, it is exciting and a blessing. God is with us; he has consecrated us, calling us before the world began to be holy and blameless in his sight — to be full of love (Eph 1). The Diaconate is a vibrant ministry, filled with many blessings in witnessing to the various life-moments of faith with the people of God. From presiding at Baptisms and Christian burial, to that of witnessing marriages and presiding at prayer, the Deacon proclaims God’s presence in our communities. But perhaps more powerful than participating in the liturgy of the Church is the Deacon’s presence as servant of charity in the society in which we live; it is in this call that God truly blesses you.

This sense of the vibrancy of the call of the Deacon is best captured in the words of Luke 4:18-19 as Jesus stands up in the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth and repeats the words of Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

As St. Luke the Evangelist recalls, all in the synagogue had their eyes fixed upon Jesus; the moment was very intense and powerful. Clearly, Jesus’ words had a tremendous impact; and yet, as Jesus related his words to their hearts, the people became angry and drove him out of town. This event tells us much about human nature. The people present with Jesus were not interested in hearing about the just word; rather, they came to Jesus for self-righteous reasons — they were blind from faith and held captive by indifference (see: Luke 13 — the Rich man and Lazarus). Because the Deacon is called to be a spiritual vessel, carrying the Gospel of Christ as a servant of all, it is of no surprise that if we are faithful to God’s calling many a time, our message will be rejected — rejected sadly enough by the indifference to the just word by the very ones who should support us.

The call to holiness is indeed narrow; and sometimes if this call be taken too personally, burnout is inevitable, reducing the fire of perfect charity and justice that resides in our hearts and minds to a mere ember of coal. For the clergy, many a time, we have the fire of God’s conviction to justice when we were newly ordained only to lose this sense of call gradually because of our being immersed in our ministry. Sometimes for the Deacon, burnout can happen because of trying to handle the tensions and balance between family, work and ministry. We must remember that the call of the Deacon is one of being a servant of charity; and, this personal ministry is one that is shared among all of the people of God. Sadly, when one is undergoing burnout in ministry or in their family or at work in society, the temptation is to go inward— to allow problems to fester, or boil, within our hearts. If we allow this to happen, stress not only occurs, but it can lead to sarcasm, a lack of charity, a selfish heart and eventually, bitterness and depression. How can one get out of this crisis? As clergy, we need to recall that our ministry is one of shared responsibility; that is, our ministry is intimately intertwined with Christ and the Church. Just as there is a Presbyterate and a College of Bishops, the Diaconate is an institution as well. Individual Deacons need to know and utilize this tremendous gift, that as Deacons, you form a body of persons connected to the ministry of the bishop. Deacons, then, ought to support each other spiritually and help each other just as priests should mutually support each other. It is vital then in each

respective diocese that bishops structure collaborative processes into the ministry of those who share in the ordained ministry. This can happen in any number of ways: from a Diocesan council, to Deanery meetings to that of having a diaconate board; in these two examples, a structure is in place whereby concerns about the Deacon and his capacity to serve is not only made known, but challenged. By acting through these conciliar measures, networking and support among lay and clergy can happen, as well as evaluating one's own performance and fulfillment in ministry. In this way, burnout is mitigated and the call of the Deacon can be more readily applied.

Sometimes in ministry, the clergy have the temptation to measure their effectiveness by human standards. The path of holiness is one whereby we are called to be in the world, but not of the world. This path, therefore, passes between a succession of dangerous whirlpools that can lead us to follow this call by human instinct and compunction, rather than by the guidance of principle and truth. In other words, we cannot use the authority given to us by virtue of our ordination or office as a means to subvert the call of the Gospel in the same way that our civil society utilizes power for selfish causes. For example, as members of the clergy, are we "one issue" focused (i.e.: the liturgy)? Do we have an unwillingness to step out of the parish limelight, and participate in Diocesan functions and the concerns of the wider Church? Do we ignore diocesan retreats, convocations, or opportunities presented in our continuing education? If we answer yes to any of these questions, it seems then we are measuring our effectiveness as clergy by our own standards — whether it be our anger, guilt, personal ambition, or selfish desire. We cannot measure the success or failure of our ministry as others do; in some ways, if we are truly following the call of justice and charity as Jesus Christ, we cannot measure our success or failure, lest God's plan not be carried out.

More poetically than descriptively, Robert Bolt's Sir Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons* suggests what I want to say. A heated conversation about the king's policies occurs between More and his son-in-law, Roper:

MORE: ... the law, Roper, the law. I know what's legal not what's right. And I'll stick to what's legal.

ROPER: Then you set man's law above God's!

MORE: No, far below; but let me draw your attention to a fact — I'm not God. The currents and eddies of right and wrong, which you find such plain sailing, I can't navigate. I'm no voyager. But in the thickets of the law, oh, there, I'm a forester. I doubt if there's a man alive who could follow me there, thank God...

ROPER: So, now you'd give the Devil benefit of the law!

MORE: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

ROPER: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

MORE: Oh? And when the last law was cut down, and the Devil turned round on you — where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast — man's laws, not God's — and if you cut them down — and you're just the man to do it — do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of the law, for my own safety's sake.<sup>5</sup>

For me, the conversation stretches between the duty towards service of Roper, saying we do this—or—that because our cause is right and all else be damned, and St. Thomas More the almost—pragmatic ideal realist. If he were a real pragmatist, as his conforming friends urge, St. Thomas More would take the king's oath and cross his fingers while doing so (Put another way, if our lives depended on our word, would we "cross our fingers" and compromise virtue and integrity in order to save our lives?). But, St. Thomas More is about integrity and standards of what is truly right according to principle. He declares that these laws and institutions say something about who we are and what matters in life. If we tear them down, St. Thomas More protests, then destruction is let loose. In other words, if we tear down the institutions of the Church, specifically the hierarchical essence of the Church, chaos and true corruption will ensue in our society. The same can be said for the institution of the Diaconate. Since its restoration in the Second Vatican Council, the Diaconate has undergone much development and struggle. In order for the institution of the Diaconate to survive, its essence and role in the service of the Church must be articulated and followed faithfully by the Deacon in the manner by which he lives his ministry.

Put another way, as clergy — as Deacons called to be servants of justice — we stand like Jesus before Pilate and Herod. Jesus does not engage with either Pilate or Herod in their games — He does not give into the power game with Pilate or Herod's cynicism. The mob and the Jewish leaders play the power game with Pilate, but Jesus

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bolt, *A Man for all Seasons* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) 66.

refuses although he could call up an army of angels. Jesus just stands there in silence to Herod's utter frustration. Our response too, if we are to avoid the darkness, often cannot be the same as those we confront. In the real scheme of things, it was not Jesus, who was on trial, but Herod and Pilate who was confronted with Truth. We cannot behave like Pilate in our ministry, compromising our call with the self-affirmation needs for personal ambition or selfish desires. As ordained members of the Church, we cannot behave like Herod, who gave into cynicism, becoming aloof in our call to be heralds of the Gospel.

The call of the Deacon to be the herald servant of justice and charity is important in our society today. We can appreciate several factors that direct our ministry of serving justice. First is a deep awareness of Sacred Scripture, specifically the call of the prophets because of their message of justice and righteousness amid a broken and fragmented world. The prophets Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are just a few examples of the powerful prophets of justice. The Church, during the Advent Season, particularly prays with the Prophet Isaiah, giving us a tremendous vision of justice. Isaiah prophesies amid the encroaching Babylonian army and implores his people to personify justice; he spoke: "Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them" (15-7). Specifically, we as clergy are challenged to be like the little child, girded with the band of justice around our waist, fastened with the belt of fidelity. Mother Teresa spoke and said, "We are called to be faithful, not successful."

As with Sacred Scripture, the Second Vatican Council has directly helped us focus our attention to justice through the articulation of the parable of the Good Samaritan to come alive in the Church. The context of the parable arises from a question posed by a lawyer (always a lawyer asking questions...) "Who, then, is my neighbor?" asked the lawyer (Luke 10: 25-37). In telling this parable, Jesus stretches us from our "comfort zones" by challenging us how to be "neighborly." (Samaritan and Jews utterly despised each other and yet, it was the Samaritan who helped the one who was beaten, robbed and left to die on the side of the road). The story has tremendous application for our day. The person lying in the ditch symbolizes people all over the world who are hurting, who need our love, and whose rights need to be protected. The increased sensitivity to the needs and rights of our brothers and sisters is what justice does for the human family. Sadly, as the Priest and the Levite walked on, passing the individual lying in the ditch, it is the Deacon who truly emulates the Good Samaritan and offers an abundant assistance to the poor.

The scene of the last judgment in Matthew 25 speaks prophetically and powerfully to the foundation of our call to justice. As Jesus shares in a very graphic way what our responsibilities are to one another, he emphatically connects us with every member of the human family: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me" (Mt 25:40). It is in this passage, specifically, that the call of the Deacon is warranted: to clothe the naked, to visit the imprisoned, and to feed the hungry. Who are they in our modern society? They are the homeless, the AIDS sufferers, alcoholics and drug addicts, the desperate poor, and the lost teen.

The call of the Deacon is not just to help fulfill the physical necessities of human life, but also the spiritual needs. It is well for the Deacon to initiate and to cooperate in programs that assist our sisters and brothers in need; and, it is here, that the spirituality of the Deacon is nourished and sustained. The body of Christ, the Eucharist nourishes the life of the Deacon, strengthening him to serve his sisters and brothers in perfect charity by becoming Eucharist for those in need. In other words, just as the Priest is called to be "another Christ" at the altar, so too is the Deacon called to be "another Christ" as a servant to others in perfect charity, feeding God's people love and justice.

The opening words of the great Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, stated by the Second Vatican Council were, and still are powerfully prophetic to the call of the Church in our day: "The joy and the hope, the grief and the anguish of the men and women of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and the anguish of the followers of Christ as well" (GS 1). While the document on the Church in the Modern World has important things to say on a variety of issues touching peace and justice, its major accomplishment was both singular and complex. It first created a new stance: "It was the first time that a document of the solemn Magisterium of the church spoke so amply about the direct aspects of Christian life."<sup>6</sup> In doing so, it moved the social agenda to center stage; it made the call of social justice an essential aspect of the Gospel of Christ proclaimed to which all Christians were committed to fulfill by virtue of their baptismal promises. *Gaudium et Spes* created a stance of both responsibility and service. "Christians cannot yearn for anything more ardently than to serve the people of the modern world ever more generously and effectively" (GS 93). The document put the Church squarely at the service of humanity. Catholicism broke out of the sanctuary, chancery, and parish to stand squarely in the heart of the people; and in doing so it brought the griefs and anxieties of humanity into the heart of the church and its mission. It is a matter of duty, then, that the clergy, especially the Deacon, be concerned with human rights and the defending of the structures of our human society, thus heralding the Gospel in the world.

We hear much today about stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. The lived expression of stewardship is

<sup>6</sup> *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests*, Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, dated December 30, 1988 and released June 27, 1989, No. 24, in *Origins*, 19/11, August 3, 1989, 169-192.

far more difficult than its proclamation. However, we as clergy have an unusual opportunity to share the powerful, life-giving message of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church. We have the opportunities to give witness to the gifts we have received individually as ordained members of the Church. We must be faithful to the people whom we serve. Because of recent scandals within the culture of death and within the Church, the credibility of the Church's ministers is questioned, leaving the remnant faithful to be skeptical of our preaching and our actions in our private and public lives. In light of this fact, it is all the more imperative that we be faithful to our vows in heralding the Gospel, taking seriously the call to be servants of charity and justice.

Therefore, I would like to offer ten suggestions for the Deacon as to how we might go about forming the vision and meeting the challenge of bringing about a more just world. These suggestions are in part adapted from the suggestions from Bishop William Skylstad in his article directed for the Priesthood in the Service of Justice:

1. **Holiness of Life:** St. Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3-10, "Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens. God chose us in him before the world began to be holy and blameless in his sight — to be full of love. He predestined us to be his adopted sons through Jesus Christ [...]." Because of the biblical tradition, we know that the Blessed Mother was taken into the care of St. John at Ephesus. It is of no surprise then to realize that even St. Paul implies that Mary is the pattern of holiness and model of discipleship when he wrote these words. As with Mary, we too are called before the world began to be holy and "immaculate" — to be full of love. Indeed, God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavens that we might truly be icons of perfect love in our world — just as Mary was the perfect and chaste spiritual vessel of Christ. Therefore, if we are not profoundly connected to God in prayer, then the message we preach will ring shallow. Jesus' words in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches," should remind us constantly that our ministry flows directly from the heart and mind of Christ. The Bread of Life nourishes us and, in receiving the Eucharist, we are called to be servants to all. In order to serve most effectively, we must as Deacons pay serious and constant attention to growth in our spirituality; continued conversion of heart should be central in our aspiration to holiness of life.
2. **Herald of the Gospel:** The Word of God is rich and, as the author of Hebrews reminds us in chapter 4, verse 12, God's word is "sharper than any two-edged sword" Through our skill in preaching the Gospel, God's Word can pierce the human heart and transform the stony heart into a heart of flesh as Ezekiel reminds us (Ezek 11:19). Proclaiming the Gospel and preaching the just word is the primary duty of the Deacon! The Deacon ought to spend time in prayer being nourished by God's Word, "eating the Word of God" as Ezekiel proclaims. In doing so, we can become better at proclaiming God's Word in homily preparation and indeed, in living our very lives. In order to "eat the Word of God," the Deacon ought to take seriously his vow in praying the Liturgy of the Hours whereby he sanctifies himself and others by immersing himself in prayer with the Scriptures throughout the day. Our challenge as preachers is to make the Word of God come alive within us and in the hearts of those whom we serve. None of us should accept that challenge lightly or casually.
3. **Assisting at the Altar, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist:** What a gift it is for the Deacon to be able to assist at the Eucharist, serving at the table of the Lord. It is here, that the icon of the Deacon is most visibly seen: the Deacon serving and preparing the way of the Lord. As the Deacon prepares the altar and serves the presence of Christ by being the minister of the Chalice, the Deacon is placed squarely in the service of the presence of Christ in perfect charity, thus revealing and articulating his true essence as a servant icon of Christ. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian's life, drawing all peoples and generations together in thanksgiving to share in the one sacrifice of Jesus. Especially at the celebration of the Eucharist we help others find Jesus in their lives through word, sacrament and community. We also help them understand that the Body of Christ on the altar is the real presence, body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ Jesus; in like manner, so too is the presence of Christ present in the Church. In other words, as Church we are the Body of Christ, with Christ as the head and we as the many members of the Body (1 Cor 12). In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, perpetual adoration of the Eucharist is part of the spirituality of the people, thus, the Eucharistic presence of Christ is being kept at vigil perpetually throughout the life of the Church. The monstrance is that instrument that holds the presence of Christ. In Latin, "monstrance" means "to show." In the French, we have the English cognate, "demonstrate" — which means to put into action. More precious than gold or silver — more precious than rubies and diamonds is the human heart. Who, then, is the most perfect monstrance? It is the Blessed Mother, Mary; she is the immaculate heart, the most perfect spiritual vessel, carrying the presence of Christ through her espousal of the Holy Spirit. The Blessed Mother has the rubies of humility and perpetual service; she has the emeralds of perfect obedience and charity. In like manner, the Deacon must strive to be a "perfect monstrance" — showing forth the presence of Christ in the world — perpetually, serving the People of God in perfect charity and justice not only by presiding at Benediction but also by living out this presence in the community.
4. **Relationship with One Another as Servant of Charity:** As the Catholic Church, we have the continued

responsibility of helping parishioners to appreciate how we are Church together and how we as part of God's Kingdom are connected to the whole human family. In a powerful scene at the end of the movie Schindler's List the industrialist Oscar Schindler and his wife are about to take leave of the Jewish community as the Nazi war machine collapses. He and his wife are surrounded by the community he had saved by placing them on his list. He looks down at his lapel to see a relatively large Nazi emblem made of gold. He takes the emblem off of his lapel, holds it for a moment in his hand, and then looks to the group about him as he breaks down in tears, wondering how many more names and lives he could have "bought" for the list with the worth of the emblem. It was a remarkable moment of connection. As Heralds of the Gospel we have the opportunity to help others connect their financial resources to the wider human family. We are only temporary stewards of these gifts; and we are called to utilize these gifts in a prophetically generous way for the betterment of society.

5. **The Diaconate:** You are members of the Diaconate of a particular church. As members of the Diaconate, we are connected in a specific way to the Bishop of the diocese; and this intimate relationship ought not be weakened by ideology, personal likes and dislikes, or personalities. The temptation to give in to the distraction of a lesser value compared to our unity as a Diaconate can be significant, because if we give into our human weaknesses, the credibility and the integrity of the Diaconate is at stake. The Diaconate is intimately connected with the ministry of the Diocesan Bishop, not because he may have many gifts, or have an exceptional personality or that he may provide a great witness, but because he is the Diocesan Bishop! This relationship implies the need of a fraternity among the Deacons and their bishop, whereby together they share intimately in the life of Christ and in their concern for each other. A football team or a baseball team doesn't do well if there is disunity on the team; in a like manner, we don't do well either if we allow our respect, reverence, and solidarity with each other to weaken in any way.
6. **The Culture of Life:** Pope John Paul II, in his recent encyclical Evangelium Vitae, powerfully encourages us to advance the culture of life in our world. Our task as Heralds of the Gospel is to help others see insightfully the real devastation and dehumanization that occur through the "culture of death." The signs of the devastating consequences of the culture of death are all about us. This awareness implies that the clergy promote the dignity of the human person in all life's stages — from the womb, in moments of poverty and persecution, until the moment of natural death, which includes the standing in solidarity with those who are imprisoned for life. In this way, the Deacon is to be a promoter of life — and of the more abundant life that Jesus has promised us! The essence of the Deacon in the culture of death is to be the Herald of the Gospel of Life whereby the Deacon proclaims liberty to the captive and opens the eyes of the blind, by serving and preaching by word and example the just Word in perfect charity.
7. **Simplicity of Lifestyle:** We are called to live a simple lifestyle as members of the clergy, thus, we identify with the anawim. The poorest of the poor are our brothers and sisters; and as the late Archbishop James P. Lyke, OFM, the former Archbishop of Atlanta, used to say, "We are evangelized by the poor." As clergy, we set an example to others in the way in which we live; therefore, we ought to be grateful and generous with our gifts and resources. The manner by which we recreate, dine, vacation, and otherwise use our resources point to our lifestyle.
8. **Heralds of God's Justice:** The proclamation of justice is a constitutive element of the ministry of the clergy, especially the Deacon. The concern is not an issue of "the left" — or the "liberal" Catholic; no, the proclamation of justice, as the Second Vatican Council Fathers decreed in Gaudium et Spes, is integral in the life of the Gospel. Each Deacon has unique and specific gifts and talents; and each Deacon is gifted in one part of ministry perhaps more than another. But in each ministry, an awareness of justice ought to be central to the Gospel. Together with Priests and Bishops, the Deacon is called to address such issues as: respect for life, racism, welfare reform, health care reform, ethnic diversity, violence, the plight of the migrant, and oppression. Specifically, the Deacon is called to serve in capacities to better humanity by placing himself in the work of justice through participating in programs that respect the Gospel of Life. This can be done diocesan wide and especially in each parish. Some Deacons may be called to do missionary work. In our Archdiocese, under the leadership of Fr. Jimmy Adams, the program "Amigos for Christ" has proved beneficial in serving the needs of the less fortunate in Nicaragua. Other Deacons have traveled to Haiti, Jamaica, or to other poor countries working with the program of "Food for the Poor."
9. **Solidarity with the Human Family:** As members of the clergy, we are the visible signs of Christ for the Church and for the world by virtue of ordination. Specifically, the Deacon is ordained as "another Christ" as "servant of perfect charity. The Diaconate is then to be a sign of service for Church. By living out this call the Deacon is to put into word and action this service. One way the Deacon can live in solidarity with the human family is to commune with the poor by visitation. Originally, the Deacon was ordained to take care of the widow, the poor and the orphan; therefore, it is, then, integral to the spiritual life of the Deacon that he take heed his call to serve others by visiting all marginalized members of the community. This can be done in a number of ways: by bringing Holy Communion to the sick and the imprisoned, by facilitating support for the homeless and the

oppressed in the community.

10. **A Joyful Hope:** As Deacons, you are part of the clergy and as such, we strive to live prophetically a vision for the Kingdom of Heaven that's here and to come. In our ministry, then, joy is central to the living out our vocations as people of hope! We are hopeful because we know by Divine Providence that the Lord is with us now; and, the Holy Spirit will guide us and teach us. We strive to live as humble instruments of the Lord, never knowing how we might be the planters of seeds or tillers of the soils of life. After all, it is the Lord who sustains the growth of all of life and who ultimately makes "all things work together for the good for those who love God" (Romans 8.28).<sup>7</sup>

As we take the time together in this Diaconate Institute to be with the Lord and to learn from Him the goodness of life, we are energized by His love and the love that is exchanged between us in this new millennium; we are encouraged to be better heralds of the Gospel of Life by the ministry of service in perfect charity and justice. Indeed, the Lord has called us and, He wants us to be his servants — as prophets of justice, as Heralds of the Gospel in our ministry. As Deacons united with each other and our respective Bishops in our Church we are challenged to "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are: believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach!" Now is the time to go forth, let us not be afraid to cross the threshold of hope!

---

## World Water Missions

For more information Deacon Steve Beers can be contacted at: [SteveBeers@worldwatermissions.org](mailto:SteveBeers@worldwatermissions.org)

Steve will be happy to come and talk to your group about sponsorship and fund raising.

---

Deacon Richard Tolcher is trying to gather information about local prison ministries-parish level.

Please contact him at [rtolcher@archatl.com](mailto:rtolcher@archatl.com) if your parish has a prison ministry.

---

## Homily Help

<http://homilies.net>

<http://www.deacbench.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.frtommylane.com/homilies.htm>

[return to top](#)

---

<sup>7</sup> William S. Skylstad, "Priesthood in the Service of Justice," in Priests for a New Millennium (Washington, D.C. Secretariat for Priestly Life and Ministry — USCC, 2000) 147-162.



THE  
AQUINAS CENTER  
*of Theology*

**Aquinas Center Website:** <http://www.catholicstudies.emory.edu> New URL and almost everything is new. See videos by prominent speakers like Archbishop Wilton Gregory and informational videos and interviews on the Catholic Studies Minor and the Atlanta Catholic Business Conference. There is also a lot of new information about our programs, our Dominican heritage, and a new parish education initiative. See how you can bring Emory scholars to your parish. For the latest programs at Emory click here: [Catholic Studies Program](#)

**Parish Education Speakers**

Want a world-class speaker for your parish for free? It is easy and we will advertise the program in the **Georgia Bulletin**. Go to: [http://aquinas.emory.edu/programs\\_parish.html](http://aquinas.emory.edu/programs_parish.html)

---

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

**STEP**, Satellite Theological Education Program, University of Notre Dame,  
Website: <http://step.nd.edu> or Call toll free at **1-866-425-7837** for more information.

University of Dayton <http://www.udayton.edu/>

Felician College <http://www.felician.edu/online/>

Catholic Distance University <http://www.cdu.edu/>

Master of Pastoral Studies-St. Leo Online Programs <http://www.saintleo.edu>

[The Catholic Deacon by Deacon James F. Papillo](#)

This website is intended to provide a useful resource for obtaining information about the Roman Catholic faith, the Roman Catholic Church and the Permanent Diaconate.

---

**The Pontifical College Josephinum**

7625 North High Street Columbus, Ohio, 43235 1-877-9DEACON (toll free) 1-877-933-2266  
<http://www.pcj.edu/distance/index.html>

For More Details Or To Register, Please Contact Us At:

1-877-9DEACON (1-877-933 2266) E-mail us at: [deacons@pcj.edu](mailto:deacons@pcj.edu)  
or visit us on the web at: [www.pcj.edu](http://www.pcj.edu)

*All are encouraged to forward this message to those deacons who may not have ready access.*

[return to top](#)

## Continuing Education for Deacons

Deacon Ray Egan will be conducting classes for the Atlanta Archdiocese Diaconate Community. These are the topics that Deacon Ray will be covering:

### Oct 15<sup>th</sup>

Hospice care of a parishioner  
Viaticum Prayers of commendation  
Prayer in the presence of the body

### Nov. 15

Review of the changes to the Sacramentary (Roman Missal) and working with the same.  
General discussion

Please mark these dates in your calendars. If you have any questions or would like to attend, please contact Deacon Ray at [REgan@archatl.com](mailto:REgan@archatl.com)

The above classes will be held at the St. Stephen Center and will run from 9:00am to 1:00pm. On those dates where this continuing education coincides with [formation dates](#) or click [here](#) for dates, you are welcome to join in for Morning Prayer at 7:40am and attend Mass at 8:00am. Attendance at these sessions will help to fulfill your continuing education requirement in Category 2.

## Spiritual Direction Training

Recently Pope Benedict XVI recommended that all should seek spiritual direction. The sparse availability of trained spiritual directors makes that goal, for many, difficult to achieve. Deacons attracted to the ministry of spiritual direction have an opportunity to be certified for spiritual direction through a program offered by Spring Hill College.

Each year Spring Hill College offers the two year program based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The first year combines the spiritual and psychological dynamics of our spiritual journey. The second year progresses to the pastoral applications and an expanded understanding of the Spiritual Exercises. Graduate credits are given to participants. The eighteen credits earned may be applied toward the thirty hours needed for a masters degree if you wish to continue your studies.

Classes meet generally every other Monday night at The Jesuit Retreat Center, Ignatius House, on Riverside Drive in Sandy Springs. For more information contact Mark Dannenfels (404-825-4775 (cell)) or [mark@markdannenfels.com](mailto:mark@markdannenfels.com). You may also view the program on the Spring Hill College web site, [www.shc.edu](http://www.shc.edu). Click on the graduate/certificate programs where the spiritual direction program is listed.

## Deacons and Marriage Preparation

December 3, 2011, at the Catholic Center in Smyrna.

This continuing education course will provide the men who are in formation for the Permanent Diaconate and the deacons of the Archdiocese with workable structures for marriage preparation. This course will review the role of the deacon in marriage preparation, various models for marriage preparation, resources and programs available from the Archdiocese and other sources as well as reviewing the canonical requirements and paperwork that must be addressed. The class runs from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm with Mass at 4:00 pm. Lunch will be provided. Registration information will be sent out in early October. Please register early, space is limited.

[return to top](#)

✠ *Please Pray for Us* ✠

*Fr. Michael McWhorter*

*Monsignor Kiernan*

*Deacon Don Kelsey*

*Linda Perri, wife of Bob Perri*

*Deacon James Bishop*

*Claudette Roberts (wife of Leon Roberts) who will undergo cancer surgery on September 19<sup>th</sup>*

*Rita Ann Moenk, wife of deceased Deacon Jean R. Moenk 9/4/2011*

*Mary Mauldin, Director of Faith Formation 8/24/2011*

*And those whom we promised to pray for ... Lord hear our prayers*

*Please check in regularly at <http://communique.archatl.com/> for those that might need our prayers.*

*If you have some one in need of our prayers please contact Deacon Mark Sholander at:  
[msholand@bellsouth.net](mailto:msholand@bellsouth.net)*

---

## DEACON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q** While participating in a Deacon's Funeral yesterday, I was reminded of a problem that I have experienced when vested clergy attend a liturgy and are seated "in choir" ie. - not up at the altar/sanctuary. After the consecration, do we remain kneeling like the congregation or do we rise and stand like the deacons who are at the altar? The deacon community is not clear on what to do, and yesterday at the funeral half stood and half remained kneeling. I have seen the same thing occur at ordinations. Needless to say, it doesn't look good when ordained clergy don't act together at liturgies as important and visible as funerals and ordinations.

**A** The right thing to do is to remain standing when the deacon on the altar is standing and kneel (if possible) when the deacon on the altar kneels. This works best when the deacons are seated so that their standing doesn't block the view of the congregation. Typically at the Cathedral for ordinations and at funerals we are placed on the side, together as a group. When this happens, and we are vested as deacons in alb and stole, we should stand/kneel just as the deacon assisting at the altar. When we would be a distraction and block the congregation we should do as they do.

*The Beacon would like to make this a regular feature. If you have any Questions, please send them to [ddorner@archatl.com](mailto:ddorner@archatl.com) or [msholander@bellsouth.net](mailto:msholander@bellsouth.net) and we will publish them.*

[return to top](#)

***PRECANA WORKSHOP  
INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION***

This workshop is designed for engaged couples preparing to marry in the Catholic Church. It is a one-day workshop beginning at 8:45 A.M. and ending at 4:05 P.M. The fee is \$110 per couple (non-refundable).

The following topics are covered during the workshop: communication, marriage sacrament, married sexuality, reconciliation and forgiveness, and married finances.

Couples should register several months before the desired workshop date. For additional information, please call: 404 920-7645 or visit the Family Life Office web page [here](#)

It is important that couples should speak with a priest or deacon at their parish before registering for this workshop.

To register, please complete the registration form from the web site and attach a check or money order made out to the Family Life Office.

Forms and dates available by clicking this link or at: <http://www.archatl.com/offices>

---

***The Last Date for 2011 African American Marriage Preparation Program:***

**November 12, 2011**

Registration forms and be found [here](#) should go to **Office of Formation and Discipleship/Pre-Cana** at 2401 Lake Park Drive SE, Smyrna, Georgia, 30080

The fee for the program is \$110.00 per couple. Registration for the program is handled by the Office of Formation and Discipleship. Please contact Lynn Crutchfield at: 404.920.7631

Workshops are held at the Lyke House at the Atlanta University Catholic Center at 809 Beckwith Street, SW.

This program is for engaged couples and couples contemplating marriage.

[return to top](#)

## ***Noteworthy Dates***

### ***DEACON CONFERENCES WITH ARCHBISHOP GREGORY***

*Do you have something you would like to discuss with your Archbishop?*

*These meetings require no appointment. The Archbishop will gladly meet with deacons on a first come, first serve basis on the following dates:*

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Date:** November 30, 2011

Contact Mardessa Smith at: [MWSmith@archatl.com](mailto:MWSmith@archatl.com) for more information.

### ***Annual Deacon retreat September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>***

Father Joseph Fonti from NY will be the retreat master.

Contact Mardessa Smith at: [MWSmith@archatl.com](mailto:MWSmith@archatl.com) for more information.

### ***Deacons and Marriage Preparation***

December 3, 2011, at the Catholic Center in Smyrna.

This continuing education course will provide the men who are in formation for the Permanent Diaconate and the deacons of the Archdiocese with workable structures for marriage preparation. This course will review the role of the deacon in marriage preparation, various models for marriage preparation, resources and programs available from the Archdiocese and other sources as well as reviewing the canonical requirements and paperwork that must be addressed. The class runs from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm with Mass at 4:00 pm. Lunch will be provided. Registration information will be sent out in early October. Please register early, space is limited.

[return to top](#)

*Deacons Wives Database*

Over the past few weeks we have worked very hard to update our database with correct contact information for all of the Deacons in the Archdiocese. We believe that we now have correct email addresses for each Deacon and as a result we can keep you up to date regarding information from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and other offices here in the Chancery.

From time to time it is both necessary and beneficial for us to be able to contact the wives of the Deacons by email. The reasons that we may need to contact them can range from prayer requests to notices about special events directed specifically to women or Deacon's wives. As a result, we would like to update our database to reflect the current email addresses of each wife of a Deacon. **To facilitate this effort if you would please kindly reply with your wife's name and email address and cell phone number to the email below,** we would be most grateful.

*Please note that we only use this contact information for messages from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and the Office of Communications. In keeping with the Archdiocesan policy, this information will not be shared with any other person or organization.*

Thank you in advance for your cooperation

Kelly Knight [kknight@archatl.com](mailto:kknight@archatl.com)

*From the USBBC*

A document from the USCCB entitled "Questions and Answers Regarding the Canonical Process for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons". The following is a link to the document:

<http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2010/10-094.shtml>

*Employment Opportunities*  
*Opportunities and Positions Available*  
*In the Archdiocese of Atlanta*

Please use this web site for the most recent job postings:

<http://www.archatl.com/offices/hr/jobs.htm>

[return to top](#)

# *Polo shirts for your favorite Deacon*

*These Shirts are now available through the Archdiocese Diaconate Office*

*They are available in Black, White, and Red.*

*Please use the order form below and allow three weeks for delivery.*



↓ Cut here ↓

---

## Deacon Shirts

Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

Size (check box):    Small    Med    Large  
                                  X Large    2XLarge

Color (check boxes)    White    Red    Black

### Shipping information:

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose: \$30.00 check for each shirt ordered

Mail to:

Archdiocese of Atlanta  
2401 Lake Park Drive  
Smyrna, GA 30080  
Attn: Mardessa Smith

***Allow three weeks for shipping and handling***

[return to top](#)

**WE ARE IN NEED OF DEACONS!**

Dear Brothers.

There is a chaplaincy ministry at the Hartsfield Jackson Airport through the Interfaith Chapel. Several deacons volunteer to serve one day of the week. It is the desire of the group to be able to provide a communion service each day. Therefore, there is a need to have a Cadre of Deacons to backup this program. As a back-up volunteer, you would be called upon to fill in if one of the assigned deacons can not make it.

Parking will be provided by the Interfaith Chapel. You would be expected to bring the Sacrament with you and to consume what might be left over.

We are planning on setting the time of the service to begin some were between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM Monday through Friday.

The chapel is on the second floor East side of the Atrium and you will not be required to go through the security screening.

If you are interested, please respond by e-mail to [ddorner@archatl.com](mailto:ddorner@archatl.com) or [REgan@archatl.com](mailto:REgan@archatl.com) and you will be contacted with more details.

Thank you,

*Deacon Ray Egan*

---

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development Grant Programs**

With your community involvement, you may be aware of initiatives in your area that are led by poor and vulnerable people and bring individuals together to change structures and policies that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. These projects may be eligible for a local or national Community Development Grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

The Community Development Grants Program is a program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's (CCHD), focuses on promoting the mission of Jesus Christ and moving forward the priorities of the USCCB; in particular, protecting human life and dignity, strengthening marriage and family life, and nurturing diversity.

Criteria for these grants have changed in recent years and the Archdiocese of Atlanta is committed to searching for initiatives that meet all the criteria.

I am writing to ask that you consider recommending to the Archdiocesan Director of Social Justice Ministries, Kat Doyle, the name and contact information for individuals leading an initiative in your community that may meet the required criteria for a CCHD grant. Kat Doyle may be reached at [kdoyle@archatl.com](mailto:kdoyle@archatl.com) or **404-920-7897**. Kat will follow up with your recommendations when a meeting is set to explain the grant application process.

Questions about grants? Email CCHD at [cchdgrants@usccb.org](mailto:cchdgrants@usccb.org). For more details about the grant process and timeline, go to [/cchd/grants/process.shtml](#) and [HUD's FY 2010 Section 8](#) you find information including the criteria for this grant program.

Thank you for your assistance in identifying possible grant recipients in your area.

*Deacon Dennis*

[ddorner@archatl.com](mailto:ddorner@archatl.com)

[return to top](#)