



DEACON TALK

Council of Deacons Newsletter • Archdiocese of Milwaukee

August 2017

Director's Report



By the time this issue of Deacon Talk gets to you, it will be well into August and nearly the end of the “slow, relaxing summer season.” As September nears, our parishes will ramp up many of their

ministries, which can mean an uptick in our service.

I am not sure there are many “slow times” for deacons. I continue to be amazed at the commitment to ministry and the firm “yes” to the urgings of the Spirit. Briefly, I want to share two special experiences of that diaconal “yes.”

In This Issue:

Director's Report.....	1
President's Report.....	2
Personnel Board	2-3
Deacon Senate Meeting.....	3-4
Roman / Episcopal Gathering.....	4
Ministers of Care.....	4
Indigent Burials.....	5
Post Ordination Formation.....	6
Rest in Peace.....	6-7
Know Your Deacons.....	7
Prayer Requests.....	7
Dates to Remember.....	8

Dcn. Bill Widmar, in hospice care in his home, moves from his bed to his recliner (about 4 ft.) every morning at 6 a.m. with the aid of his son. He tries to stay busy with his tablet, reading, and television. He lamented to me last week, “I’m a deacon. I should be doing something to help people.” I reminded him that his prayer was a very powerful part of his diaconal ministry. He responded positively but added, “I hope it is enough, as it is all that I can do at the time.”

Dcn. Bill Banach is in inpatient treatment and rehab for a blood infection that was life changing for him. Still unable to walk without help, he is working hard to regain his independence. The center has a Communion service on Saturday afternoons led by a lay minister. Bill has been proclaiming the Gospel at the services during his time there. Last week, the lay minister took ill and the center told Bill on Saturday morning that the service was cancelled. Bill’s response was, “Why? I will lead the service.” Bill made a flurry of phone calls and arranged for a friend to bring the Eucharist, his Rite book, and his stole for the 3 p.m. service. At the community lunch, he made sure to invite people to the service. He led nearly 20 people in the prayer that afternoon.

Our diaconal call rarely takes a “vacation” and never really ends until we receive our final call home. To the Bills – thank you for your witness! Dcn. Widmar is accepting prayer requests at: wwidmar@wi.rr.com.

Blessings and the Peace of our God be with you all!

Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

President's Report

Greetings Brother Deacons and Wives,

When the most recent Ordination Class met for our inaugural Post-Ordination Program, they used James Keating's book, "The Heart of the Diaconate: Communion with the Servant Mysteries of Christ as a primer for the conversation." I have greatly enjoyed reading the book which now resides on my iPad. One area under chapter 2 I really connected with. Located under "The Principles of Formation" was subtitled, "Being Established in a New Imagination."

I am sharing some quotes as food for reflection:

- "Christ is laboring to unleash within those who worship a new imagination, which St. Paul calls the "mind of Christ."
- It is radical work because it "replaces one cult (popular culture) with another cult (the obedience of Christ)."
- "Possessing the mind of Christ ... does not require a sectarian withdrawal from popular culture, but it does require a new discerning presence within the same culture."
- "One of the goals of formation is to encourage the men to welcome a new diaconal imagination ... (the) capacity to stay connected to the truths of the faith by bringing to mind the actions of Christ the Servant."
- "To imagine, discern, and then act is to prolong the ministry of Christ in time through one's own faithful action."
- "The mission of the Church is better served when we ordain men who can imagine new things as the fruit of their being fascinated with Christ's servant mysteries."
- "Being possessed by a diaconal imagination assist a man to welcome Christ's own Spirit as Christ is communicating how to best serve charity and truth in the present culture."
- "This can only occur if the deacon has suffered the coming of the mind of Christ as his new way of imagining ministry."
- "Once this Christ-centered mind begins to mature, the deacon's ministry of Word and charity will become attractive within the culture since people are starving for truth."

The famished will recognize his words and actions as "true food."

I found the progression of all these quotes very fruitful and familiar with our previous discussions on *Habitus Novus Mentis*, sparked from a prior Deacon Retreat led by Deacon Bill Ditewig. He made it clear the Second Vatican Council had this in mind when supporting the restoration of the permanency of the diaconate. It is up to us to re-imagine our ministries with the help the Trinity provides.

On a final note, I would like us all to give a huge thank you to Deacon Gene Kempka for his many years of service to the Senate as secretary-treasurer. The Senate in particular wishes to express its gratitude for all you have done Gene.

Sincerely Yours with Fraternal Charity,

Deacon Dale Nees

Deacon Personnel Board

The Deacon Personnel Board met on 6/26/2017 at the Cousins Center. In attendance were Deacons: Kehrer, Collins, Gulig, Nosacek, C. Schneider, and Chmielewski. Dcn. Campbell was excused.

After prayer and approval of the 2/18/2017 minutes, Dcn. Collins shared his thoughts and wisdom as he closed out his 17 years on the Personnel Board. His reflection had three very important points of emphasis. First, he reflected that serving the deacon community, specifically on the Personnel Board, is an important ministry often unappreciated and undervalued. Second, the issue of confidentiality in addressing and discussing Board issues is very important. Lastly, the Board role in monitoring and upholding deacon responsibilities cannot be minimized.

We are one diaconate, and together we work to be the best that we can be individually, thus making our entire diaconal community stronger and more effective. There are expectations for all deacons and all should be held to the same level of compliance. Deacons who fail to meet expectations should be

called into compliance by the Director, the Personnel Board, the Vicar of Clergy, and at last resort by the Archbishop, with a suspension of faculties if necessary.

The group then discussed the first required post ordination program for the newly ordained that was held on 5/20/2017. Dcn. Kehrer was the main facilitator for the day and Dcns. Schneider, Nosacek, and Chmielewski also participated. The overall assessment of the day by the group was very positive. The second required session for the class of 2016 has been scheduled for 6/2/2018 with a planned focus on liturgical issues.

Deacon specific issues were next on the agenda with items that included: renewed/pending covenants, status changes, and the class of 2016. There was also extended discussion about the “non-compliant” deacons who fail to file an Annual Formation Report. The Director has made repeated attempts to obtain the reports from numerous deacons who have habitually ignored the annual expectation. At this time there are six deacons who continue to ignore all correspondence about this issue. This concern will be presented to the new Vicar of Clergy in the coming weeks. The group also discussed the status of “Leave” as well as the possibility of the Board requesting assignment changes to parishes in need.

The meeting ended with a special thank you to Dcns. Collins and Kehrer, who were attending their final Board meeting. Dcn. Scott Campbell will now be the lone rep for Districts 4/5/12. Districts 1/2/3 will need to elect a new rep for the Fall meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday 10/7/2017, 9:30 – 11 a.m. at the Cousins Center.

Respectfully submitted, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Deacon Senate

The Deacon Senate met on May 17, 2017 at the Cousins Center. Deacons in attendance: Nees, Paczkowski, Fogarty, Bowen, Wiese, Chmielewski. Excused: Ebel, Jansen, Campbell, Maack, Kilkenny. Opening prayer led by Dcn. Wiese.

We had two guests. The first was **Michelle Nemer of the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Office**. She has met with the Senate on other occasions and will likely be a regular visitor to our Senate meetings as we continue to be reminded of the Synod mandates and implementation. Michelle gave us updates on a number of ongoing and planned initiatives: the Summer Institute for Lay Ministry 6/6-6/8, the ongoing Multi-Parish Institute, which will also hold sessions in the Fall of 2017 and 2018, Spirituality of Stewardship Conference 11/3-11/4, and the next steps of the Catholic Leadership 360.

Michelle also provided some preview information about the activities focusing on the 175th Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Preview events will start in 2018 with the formal celebrations to start with an opening Mass on November 25, 2018 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee. In mid-2019, there are plans for a special focus on parish/deanery service days as a coordinated effort to highlight the array of service the Church offers to the community. The deacon community will be invited to offer input and possible leadership to this phase of the celebration. Stay tuned for details.

Our second guest was **Anne Haines from the Office for Urban Ministry**. Anne is working with Fr. Tim Kitzke with a special focus on respect life issues. Anne is currently in the planning stages of establishing a crisis response team that would be available to intervene, support, and lead prayer at city crisis events. Deacons should watch for invitations and training opportunities.

The remainder of the meeting touched on the following topics: Gene Kempka has resigned as secretary-treasurer due to health issues. Scott Campbell has offered to complete Gene’s term in this position with the full approval of the Senate.

The table that will display the Deacon Necrology book at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist has been completed and delivered. It is a beautiful addition to the niche that also displays the Deacon Icons of St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. The table

cost \$650 and payment from the Deacon Council account was approved.

There were questions but no answers on the Holy Hour for Life for 2018. We are awaiting direction from the Archbishop and the Office of Human Dignity about whether the request to move the Holy Hour to October 2018 will be approved.

The meeting ended with prayer and discussion of upcoming meetings. Our July 19 meeting will be cancelled and our September 20 meeting will have an earlier start time of 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Roman / Episcopal Gathering

On Saturday 6/3/2017, deacons and some spouses from the Episcopal and Roman Catholic traditions gathered for our annual meeting. Six Episcopal deacons, nine Roman deacons, and three spouses spent the morning in prayer, sharing, and visioning at St. Mary's Visitation, Elm Grove. The St. Mary's family was most hospitable, offering a beautiful space and great refreshments under the gracious hosting efforts of Dcn. Richard Piontek.

Our gathering focused on two very important actions that have arisen from these annual gatherings. The first was Dcn. Piontek offering a sign of appreciation to Dcn. Tom Binder (E) for his five years of ministry at St. Mary's. Tom and Richard had met at one of the first of these gatherings and Richard invited Tom to lead a grief/bereavement group at St. Mary's. Tom accepted the invitation and has ministered to the grieving, including Richard, at St. Mary's ever since. Richard presented Tom with a beautiful sculpture of the Visitation. It is a desk top version of the large sculpture outside the St. Mary's school depicting Mary and Elizabeth greeting each other.

The second item of discussion was the "**Collars on the Corner**" effort that began after last year's gathering under the leadership of Dcn. Kevin Stewart (E) and Dcn. Jim Banach (R). Kevin and Jim spoke about their journey of discernment and

visioning that led to this beautiful ministry of prayer on the street. What began as two deacons offering prayers and water on the corner of 51st & Center has grown to a regular prayer time on the corner. The deacons have offered the same prayer opportunity on the corners outside the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Milwaukee. The prayer has expanded to prayer "boxes" in multiple laundromats throughout the diocese and a prayer network that extends to multiple states and as far as Kenya.

We plan to continue this relationship of solidarity as we continue to look for opportunities to share ministry. The core team (Jim Banach and I along with two Episcopal deacons) will continue to meet monthly to share and vision. If any of you have ideas or suggestions for future ministry, please let me or Jim know. The large group will convene again in the Spring of 2018, hosted by an Episcopal parish.

Ministers of Care

Greetings everyone!

We would like to let the diaconal community be aware of what the Ministry of Care Committee is working on this summer and also inform you of some ministry formation opportunities.

Ministry of Care volunteers are present to those in the diaconal community of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee who have suffered loss through death or illness. We assure them of our love and care for them, and through our presence, bring them the peace and love of God who resides in each one of us. We thus help to fulfill the mandate from the Apostles to the first deacons to serve the widowed and tend to their needs.

Our core committee is busy working in conjunction with our brother deacons planning the Memorial Mass, which honors all deceased deacons and their wives. This year's celebration is Sunday, October 15, 2017, 3 p.m., at St. Peter Claver Church in Sheboygan. Bishop Sklba is presiding. A dinner will follow the celebration. More details will follow – make sure you mark your calendars!

The Continuing Formation of Clergy Office is offering a presentation by Fr. Marty Pable entitled, "Ministry in Times of Loss and Grief." It is Thursday, September 21, 2017, 1 p.m., at the Cousins Center. We are urging all our volunteers to attend this wonderful formation opportunity in lieu of our annual meeting talk. It is of no charge for retired deacons, wives, and widows. Active deacons will need to pay \$40 from their Clergy fund. A big thank you to the Formation Office for offering this timely course.

The Redemptorist Retreat Center is offering a silent weekend retreat facilitated by Jennifer Christ entitled, "Life's Necessary Losses. Grieving Soulfully. Opening to Transformation." It is the weekend of December 8-10, 2017. Jennifer is a faith-filled dynamic speaker you are sure to enjoy! For more information visit the website: www.redemptoristretreat.org.

There are two websites you might enjoy. You can also follow them on Facebook. One is www.refugeingrief.com and the other is www.thegrieftoolbox.com.

If you have any suggestions for resources you have found helpful in your ministry to the widowed or anyone grieving the loss of a child or parent, please let us know what they are so we can share them.

We are always looking for volunteers; for our core committee and/or to walk with the widows/widowers of the diaconate. If you would like to get involved or just want to talk about the ministry, please contact me or any one of our members: Tom and Jean Surges, Ralph and Jane Kornburger, Jan Telderer, Kathy Bitante, or Bill Banach.

Have a great rest of the summer!

Many blessings to you! Thank you for your service to the Church and each other.

Maryann Ebel, Ministry of Care
maryannebel@gmail.com

Indigent Burials

In December of 2016, I was invited, as a representative of the deacon community, to be part of a discussion about the burial of the indigent in Milwaukee County. The discussion had begun earlier in 2016 with the Urban Ministry Office of the Archdiocese and Milwaukee County Human Services officials. The group grew to include the Archdiocesan Cemeteries, a funeral home, other diocesan offices, and now the deacons.

There was a clearly identified need of 10-20 bodies annually being unclaimed in Milwaukee County. The plan called for the Archdiocese, through the Urban Ministry Office, and the Catholic Cemeteries to arrange for a dignified burial for these unclaimed bodies. The invitation to the deacon community was for us to be the ministers who would officiate at the burial/committal.

It took until June for all the bureaucratic hurdles to be cleared thus the first indigent burial took place on Friday June 2nd at Holy Cross Cemetery. Fr. Tim Kitzke officiated at this first burial for Timothy Decker who died on 5/12/17 but whose family was unable to pay for a burial. At this first burial, there was a significant presence of the press and diocesan officials and even two relatives of Timothy.

Since that burial, there have been two additional burials: Cristobal Rojas on 7/3 and John Michael Mahoney on 7/18. I led the burial prayer at both services and there was a nice diaconal presence at both, 7 (and 2 wives) on 7/3 and 4 on 7/18. Additionally, cemetery officials, staff, and the funeral home driver take the time to offer a solemn and dignified prayer for the deceased.

The present plan is for Milwaukee County to release unclaimed bodies to Peace of Mind Funeral Home who then contact Holy Cross Cemetery to prepare a burial spot. Mary Thiel, Director of the Cemeteries, then contacts Fr. Kitzke about scheduling the burial. In reality Fr. Kitzke will rarely have time to officiate. Thus, the next call comes to me to assign a

deacon to lead prayer at the burial. I hope to attend most of the burials but do not plan on leading the service each time.

Dean Daniels from the Worship Office and Fr. Kitzke developed a committal prayer that is non-denominational and has been approved by the Archbishop and the County. The prayer was used at the first three burials and will be used over the next year. There will be a review of the committal prayer next summer.

I will notify the deacon family of future indigent burials. Please consider each notice an invitation to pray for and help bury the dead. 25 deacons have offered to be available to lead the burial prayer and I plan to use their services in the future.

Respectfully submitted, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

POST ORDINATION FORMATION

In June of 2016, I met with Dcns. Lazaga, Ebel, and Nees to discuss and plan a required post ordination formation program for the newly ordained. This formation is highly recommended by the "National Directory." To date, there had been no effort to provide this formation for the newly ordained.

I presented our plan to the Archbishop's Exec Committee in October and received not only their support but their directive to make this happen. Our plan calls for a one day session near the end of the first three years post ordination. Year one would focus on "Being, Becoming Deacon." Year two would focus on liturgical practices and year three on service of justice and charity.

We had our first session with the class of 2016 on 5/20/2017 at the Cousins Center. We met in conjunction with the deacon formation group sharing Morning Prayer and Mass with them. Questionnaires were sent out in early May to the new deacons, spouses, and pastors as a way to get feedback before our gathering. We also gave them the book "Heart of the Diaconate" by James

Keating and asked them to read and reflect on its contents.

Deacon Dan Kehrer was the primary facilitator for the day as he shared insights, thoughts, and reflections with the deacons (and spouses whose attendance was required). As expected, Dan did a great job leading the group to in depth reflection on "Being/Becoming Deacon."

After Mass and a nice box lunch from Sendiks, Dan started the afternoon session with some summary comments before we then split up the deacons and their wives. The wives discussion was led by Rita Mezydlo, Cindy Schneider, and Mary Chmielewski while the deacon exchange was directed by Dcns. Kehrer, Nees, Nosacek, Schneider, and I. The day ended with a blessing before 3 p.m. allowing any deacons present time to get to afternoon liturgies.

Overall the day went very well with positive feedback from all involved. Our second session has been scheduled for 6/2/2018 again here at the Cousins Center and again in conjunction with the formation group. We will be focusing on liturgical practices and Dean Daniels from the Arch Office of Worship will be our primary presenter. All deacons are invited for this day as a refresher or just a support for our new deacons. Any additional thoughts, suggestions, or ideas are most welcome.

Respectfully submitted, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Rest in Peace



Deacon Bob Wodushek died on May 22, 2017. Bob was born 3/2/38 in Milwaukee. He graduated from Marquette High in 1956 and then

attended Marquette University for 2 years specializing in Business. He worked for his father in their family appliance business until 1963. He then worked for 10 years for G.A.F. Corp. as a plant manager. In 1973 he became the owner, CEO and

Chairman of his own business, Photoland Inc. He eventually handed down the business to his son in 2009. Bob also served his country in the Army Reserves 1961-1969 and was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant.

Bob married the love of his life Kathy on 9/26/1959 at St. Mary Visitation, Elm Grove. Bob and Kathy have 4 children: Mary Sue (Joseph) Przybylski, Michael (Joy), Kathleen (Douglas) Coenen, and Joseph. They also have the blessing of 10 grandchildren.

Bob began his diaconate formation in 1988 at St. Francis Seminary. He was ordained a Permanent Deacon on June 13, 1992 by Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B. at Mater Christi Chapel at the Cousins Center. Bob was assigned to St. Anthony the Hermit Parish in Menomonee Falls where he served until his retirement from covenanted ministry in 2005. In addition to his regular service at the altar Bob did prison ministry, visited the sick, and was very involved in the Menomonee Falls food pantry. His true service passion however was ministering to the addicted, especially those addicted to alcohol. Bob was trained in counseling to the chemically dependent and served as a special consultant to the Archdiocese for many years in this capacity.

Visitation for Deacon Bob was held on Saturday May 27, 2017 at St. Anthony Parish in Menomonee Falls which included an early visit from Archbishop ListECKI. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at 11 a.m. with St. Anthony pastor Fr. Dennis Budka presiding. Concelebrants included Fr. Jerry Hudziak and Fr. Loyola Amalraj and Very Reverend James Lobacz, Vicar for Clergy representing the Archbishop. Deacons Mike Rooney and Mike Chmielewski assisted at the altar. Our prayer included 17 deacons and eight wives/widows who honored Bob's diaconal service with a formal procession into church and an honor guard recession as Bob's casket was placed into the hearse. Bob was buried in the parish cemetery.

Fr. Budka reflected on the first reading from Ecclesiastes on the special "times" of Bob's life. In

particular, Bob's time of service, to his family, country, business, and his Church, thru the Diaconate, were important callings. Keep in prayer Kathy and the entire Wodushek family. May he rest in Peace!

Know Your Deacons

St. Athanasius was born sometime between 296 and 298 and from his youth was pious, learned, and deeply versed in the sacred writings. Bishop Alexander of Alexandria chose Athanasius to accompany him to the Council of Nicea in 325. It was there that Athanasius became the primary defender of the Church against the Arian Heresy. Shortly after the Council, Athanasius succeeded Alexander as the Patriarch of Alexandria, a position he held for 46 years, 17 of which he was in exile due to his conflict with 4 different Emperors. Athanasius never wavered in his fight against Arianism, which questioned the Divinity of Jesus. After the death of Arius and Emperor Constantine and multiple challenges by the Holy See as well as subsequent Emperors; Athanasius eventually resumed his role as the Patriarch of Alexandria and died peacefully in 373 on May 2nd, his feast day.

He is honored as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church. All this as "only" a Deacon.

Prayer Requests

Deacon Tony Martino`84
Deacon Francisco Blas`02 and wife Florencia
Deacon Roberto Fuentes`02 and wife Lorenz
Deacon Jay Wittak`05 and wife Susan
Deacon Dick Govek`92 and wife Dorothy
Deacon Ed Weber`81 and wife Sue
Deacon Baleriano Gonzalez`84
Deacon Ron Schneider`96
Susan Sommers, wife of Dcn. David`00
Iris Acosta, wife of late Dcn. Carlos
Kathy Wodushek, wife of late Dcn. Bob
Deacon Bill Banach`83
Deacon Bill Widmar`92
Deacon Larry Normann`84
Father of Dcn. Aristeo Ortiz`02
Deacon Jim Chrisien`98

The Recently Deceased and their Families

Deacon Bob Wodushek, 5/22/2017
Timothy Decker, buried 6/2/2017
Cristobal Rojas, buried 7/3/2017
Doug Surges, brother of Dcn. Tom, 7/1/2017
John Michael Mahoney, buried 7/18/2017
Nena Bermudez-Salvo, mother in law of Dcn.
Benavente, 7/22/2017



Dates to Remember

Deacon / Lay Minister Gathering
Cousins Center, August 25, 2017, 8:30-2:30

Memorial Mass 2017
October 15, 2017, St. Peter Claver, Sheboygan
3 PM, Bishop Sklba presiding

Dcn. Retreat 2017
11/2-11/5/2017, Redemptorist
Director Fr. Jerry Herda, Vicar for Clergy

Wives Morning of Reflection
11/4/17, details TBA

Deacon Day 2018
April 14, 2018, St James, Menomonee Falls 8 a.m.
until end of lunch. Presenter, Dcn. Bill Hampton,
Catholic Relief Services

Deacon Wives Retreat
April 26-29, 2018, Siena Center

Post Ordination Formation for class of 2016
(second session), 6/2/2018, Cousins Center

Ordination, Class of 2018, September 8, 2018
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist



Published and Edited by Deacon Services
P.O. Box 070912, 3501 South Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912
414-769-3409

Deacon Michael J. Chmielewski, Director