

REGION II NEWS

Volume 2 Issue 2

Winter 2007

Archdiocese of Toronto

Dioceses of Region II

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Toronto News Briefs

By Deacon Bert Cambre

TORONTO HAS A NEW SHEPHERD

The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, announced on December 16th, 2006 that he had accepted the resignation of His Eminence, Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic, as the Archbishop of Toronto. At that time, the Holy Father named Archbishop Thomas Collins, then Archbishop of Edmonton, as the next Archbishop of Toronto. Archbishop Collins became the 12th Bishop and 10th Archbishop of Toronto to lead the diocese since it was established in 1842. Archbishop Collins, born in Guelph, Ontario, was ordained a priest in 1973. He was named Bishop in 1997 and appointed Archbishop of Edmonton in 1999. He has also served as Rector of St. Peter's Seminary in London. Archbishop Collins' ceremony of installation took place on January 30, 2007.

From Toronto to Midland, Oshawa to Mississauga, the Archdiocese of Toronto is the spiritual home to 1.6 million Catholics,

celebrating Mass at 223 parishes in more than 30 languages each week. As we reflect on the news of Cardinal Ambrozic's retirement, we have many reasons to be thankful to God for the leadership, friendship and direction he has given us through the last sixteen years.

We enjoyed his keen appreciation, support and vision since the time the diaconate was restored as a permanent order in our diocese thirty-five years ago. He saw the diaconate as it was born and took shape in our archdiocese.

He was our teacher both at the seminary and at some continuing education sessions. Our vicar for a very short time before Bishop Clune, he later became our ordinary and has provided constant support and wisdom to our diaconate community.

We thank Cardinal Ambrozic for all he has done for our Archdiocese and Diaconate and we wish him a very happy retirement.

We also welcome with enthusiasm our new ordinary Archbishop Thomas Collins. He restored the diaconate in Edmonton in 2003 and tapped on our experience as he prepared for it. At the end of 2003, Archbishop Collins wrote five weekly articles

for the Western Catholic Reporter (<http://www.wcr.ab.ca/bishops/collins/2003/indexdeacon.shtml>) in which he introduced and explored our permanent order.

These articles are excellent and show that we share the view of diaconate mission. Let me quote a few words regarding our "raison d'etre", the ministry of service. In his third weekly article of November 24, 2003, entitled "The deacon -- word, altar, charity", he writes:

"... But the liturgical ministry around the altar must not be the focal point of the deacon's life, and in fact one who is attracted to the diaconate because of this dimension should not apply. From earliest times, the deacon has been primarily characterized as the one who is ordained to imitate Christ the servant in the practical works of charity. He is to be in the background, quietly serving others in a multitude of works that will vary from place to place, dependent upon the local needs. He is ordained to serve, and in that to work in concert with those who fulfill the numerous other roles within the Christian community."

We are reassured and happy to welcome and offer Archbishop Collins our obedience and respect in anticipation of an even more vibrant diaconate in Toronto.

**THE DIACONATE CONVOCATION FOR
REGION II COMES TO
TORONTO - July 27 - 29, 2007**

The Region II Diaconate Convocation will happen in Toronto this year. The invitations and more information will be forthcoming soon but mark your calendar now and ensure that you can attend. Our speakers will be Ted Schmidt on Friday evening and Bill Ditewig on Saturday and Sunday.

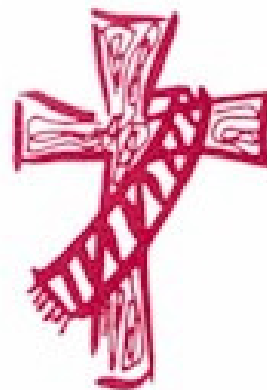
This continuing education event allows us to meet, to study, to pray, and to have fun being together with deacons from our other dioceses in northern New York and southern Ontario without having to travel much. It coincides with the 35th anniversary of the restoration of the Diaconate in our Archdiocese.

Our new Archbishop Thomas Collins will pre-

side at the Saturday's Eucharist. The Convocation this summer will be held at the University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus. The invitation to attend will be open to all deacons and their wives as well as widows of deacons and candidates and wives in their 3rd or 4th Years of Diaconate Formation Programs. The theme for the weekend is: "Solidarity with Humanity" "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965.

**TORONTO'S DIACONATE CELEBRATES
35 YEARS**

Our Diaconate was restored in 1972, so this year marks the 35th anniversary of its restoration. For that purpose we are planning a commemoration insert in the Catholic Register. Articles or pictures around the theme of the Toronto Diaconate, ministry or the bonding with the Diaconal community through convocations are welcome.



Diocese of Rochester

Transformation and Spirituality in a Ministry of Service

By Deacon George Welch

Our baptism and our order call us to continuous conversion. We are called to a relationship. As a deacon in my twenty-fifth year of ministry I have found the Wisdom sayings of Jesus call us to a continuous growth in spirituality. "...But when you pray go to your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matt. 6:6) So from this contemplative practice I hope to share with you why contemplative prayer is nourishment for active ministry.

The deacon is called to a rich spirituality that calls for the integration of the head (formation) heart (conversion) and hand (service). In relationships it is important to notice when someone shows up for us. Yet the truth is that we become preoccupied with all we have to do that we look right through people and neglect even those we love. Being open and present for others doesn't happen because you wish it. It requires attention and intention. If we cannot develop human relationships on the fly we cannot expect to develop a relationship with the Divine without intention and attention. Learning to notice when God shows up is a huge part of the spiritual journey. Opening ourselves to the presence and action of God in our life leads us to a life in the Spirit and an opening of our crowded lives to the movements of the Spirit.

The ordination for deacon provides insight into diaconal spirituality. Before the deacon's promise of obedience in the ordination rite the Bishop asks four questions that shed light on the spirituality of prayer, study and action. He asks if the candidate *is willing to be open to the Holy Spirit* by the laying on of hands. This Spirit is the Spirit of love and life. It is the time-

less call to transformation. It is a call that asks: are you open to an intimate relationship with God? You are invited to open yourself to the Divine Presence.

The second question asks "*are you resolved to hold the mystery of faith?*" We hold that mystery through the Scriptures. The gospel is seen as the transformative word that brings us into this life in the spirit. Are we grounded in the word? Do we pray the scriptures and invite that living word into our resurrected life with Christ not just resuscitated life? The second examination calls us to be spirituality grounded in the scriptures.

The third examination asks "*are you resolved to maintain and deepen a spirit of prayer?*" This is yet another call to deeper spirituality. Prayer is a relationship. Our call therefore is to a deeper and continuing transforming relationship with the reality of the God in our lives. Our prayer is grounded in scripture. Our promise is to celebrate those scriptures in our life by celebrating the liturgy of the hours. We find ourselves pulled into the loving embrace of Abba, Father who is waiting for us to respond to that relationship. A spirit of prayer shows itself through our consent to the presence and action of God. Prayer is the language of love. It is a way of being in love with God. This contemplative prayer does not replace other prayer, but it enhances and draws us back to prayers that enhance our relationship with God.

The last examination challenges us in our spirituality to put on Christ. The bishop asks, "*Are you resolved to shape your way of life always according to the example of Christ?*" This is the foundation of our spirituality of service to not only follow the example of Jesus but to put on Christ. The contemplative dimensions of the gospel are therefore integral to diaconal spirituality. We are speaking of here, "You must be born from above" (John 3:70), or "Unless a grain of wheat fall into the

earth and dies it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24) or more strikingly, "for whoever wants to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). As Christians in ministry we are called to transformation of the human person.

In the liturgy the candidate prostrates for the Litany of the Saints. Then the Bishop concludes the prayer for the candidates, "*we ask you to bless them and make them holy*". We are reminded just before the laying on of hands that we are called to be holy. We are called to put on Christ. We are called to live the Paschal Mystery by letting go of our false self and to put on Jesus. We are called to be in a relationship with a God who loves us and calls us to serve. Holiness is being aware of the spiritual. This relationship goes beyond the ordinary awareness of life. Our awakening is to greater self knowledge. We are not plagued by a sense of isolation and anxiety that is so prevalent with the ordinary level of seeing the world. Jesus the healer and person of prayer is our model.

The question from those who seek a deeper spirituality is: what is your method? The answer Basil Pennington gave is that our whole life is our method. As deacons we are called as the early Christian to enter into "The Way". Jesus is "the Way, the Truth and the Life," He was clear that "greater love than this no man hath than he lay down his life for his friend". The way for us Christians is to love the Lord our God and one another. We are called to be the grain of wheat.

When we started on this Way of service our spiritual dimension was at the personal level, and we gathered information on how this life would affect us and the choices we were to make about this way of life. The formation program continued to

give us information as we began to form ourselves. We began to pay attention to the unfolding of the spirit in the lives of those who believe. Yet there are so many obstacles to paying attention in our culture. The movement of the spirit needs to be addressed in retreats and liturgies

The Spiritual life never stops to be addressed in this rite, mainly to be transformed. We are called to continue to grow in our life with Christ. This may also be referred to as a conversion. Our lives are cluttered with the material. Conversion is yet another name for this process of transformation. It may also be called Contemplation which again is simply paying attention. Contemplation is simply reading reality from the inside out. It is prayer that transforms, and brings us to an awareness of the sacred. All of us have our inner work. We are all called to Contemplation.

Spirituality is not achieved overnight. It is our growing experience of the sacred. The vocation to diaconal ministry calls us to the contemplative dimension of the gospel. The path of contemplation was described by Guigo II as a ladder that helps us ascend to the heavens. This was referred to as *Lectio Divina* and the progressive steps lead to a contemplative life. The Ladder of Monks suggested that Spirituality was achieved by the following of four acts. First there was *attentive reading of the scriptures*, then meditation to probe them for their hidden truth, then prayer that turned the heart from the scriptures to God, and finally contemplation as the transcending of self in union with God.

The most striking point said Basil Pennington about this practice of transformation is its simplicity. All we need to do is open ourselves. God does the rest. It is not easy, but it is a clear path. Openness is the main ingredient plus making a space and time in your hearts. This is the way to make the first great commandment to love God with your whole mind, our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole strength real in our life.

Understanding that we are in conversion throughout our whole life is a key to diaconal spirituality. We are called to a conversion of heart. Are we in love with God? What does that relationship look like? What are my loving practices? Because the contemplative practices invite that intimacy with God, they are ways for those in ministry to grow stronger and receive comfort and peace.

Each member of the community comes to his or her walk with God from a diversity of culture, experience and commitment. The richness of this community has many spiritual practices to share. The contemplative prayer practices include the following as examples:

1. Centering Prayer 2. Praying the Scripture (Lectio Divina) 3. Prayer of intention and Attention. 4. Welcoming Prayer.

In Second Corinthians 3:18 we are invited to transformation. "All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." We are simply called to move into our hearts. We are called to be like Mary the first contemplative who pondered these things in her heart. What we are called to is a Divine encounter. That is what enlivens these relationships.

When you responded to the examination questions on ordination day you were not at the end of process but at the beginning. You were invited to be in relationship and pray from your hearts. The prayer is not specific words or even actions. Prayer is a way of life. We are not in this relationship alone. God is for us. Abba, Father is waiting for us to respond.

In the prayer of Consecration the Bishop is our Abba, and he prays, "*Lord, send forth upon them the Holy Spirit, that they may be strengthened by the gift of the sevenfold grace to carry out faithfully the work of the ministry. May they excel in every virtue: in love that is sincere, in concern for the sick and the poor, in unassuming authority, in self-discipline, and in holiness in life.* We are called to holiness, a relationship with God.

Do you desire a closer and more intimate walk with Christ? We are called to that relationship and the practices that will help us get there. Our next step is to say amen and to find the spirituality that sustains so that you can put on Christ."

This short essay is a knock on the door of our hearts. It is an invitation to self discovery and to realize that there is such richness in the Christian life. You are invited to share what

strengthens your ministry and to open up to those practices that may sustain you as you give to others. We are like the caterpillar that must yield up the life it knows and submit to the mystery of interior transformation. Formed in the Spirit of Service and Love we are called to pay attention to the life within.

Integrated Spirituality Plan For Body Mind and Spirit

1. Have listening sessions where we increase awareness of the spiritual practices and life of those who serve in ministry. Particular attention is paid to the experiences, practices and spiritual development of the individual deacon, spouse and family.

2. A spirituality survey is developed to capture the understanding and practices of the community. The intent is to enhance a community of spirituality. All dimensions and experiences are to be valued.

3. A summary of practices, understandings and experience is developed for sharing with the diaconal community and the Personnel Board. A look at how we sustain ourselves in the Spiritual Life. The Spiritual dimensions will include head, heart and hand (social gospel)

4. A recommendation is made to the Board on a plan to develop a transformational based Spirituality Process for the Diaconal Community of the Diocese of Rochester.

References:

- Cynthia Bourgeault, *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, 2004
 Thomas Keating, *Open Mind Open Heart Continuum*, NY, 1986
 Thomas Keating, *Manifesting God, Lantern Books*, NY 2005
 Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God*, Crossroads Publication, NY, 1994
 Basil Pennington, *Lectio Divina: Renewing an Ancient Practice*, Crossroads, NY 1998.

**Minutes of NADD Region II meeting
November 9-10, 2006
Our Lady of Mercy Conference Center
LeRoy, New York**

Thursday, November 9

The following were present for the meeting: Deacon Bert & Terry Cambre, Toronto; Deacon John & Jocelyn Ezard, Kingston; Deacon David Palma, Rochester; Deacons Ted May, Ted Pijacki & Greg Feary, Buffalo; and Deacon Ray Duplechain, New Orleans, our presenter.

Following dinner all gathered for the business meeting at 7:30 pm.

Evening Prayer was led by Deacon Feary.

The Minutes of Newburgh, NY meeting of 7/21-22/06 were reviewed.

Deacon May circulated the treasurer's report, which showed a balance of \$997.57. It was noted that the travel costs of Deacon Duplechain were yet to be paid. Deacon Cambre asked when dues were to be paid, and was advised that 2007 dues were due in January.

Deacon May gave an Update on Region II membership, noting the following: *Section F of Article IV of the Constitution, calls for a Rep to be elected for 2 years with a maximum of 3 terms. Each term starts at the annual meeting.* Since Deacon May was completing a term, Deacon Cambre made a motion that Deacon May be nominated for a second term. Deacon Palma seconded the motion and all voted yea. Deacon Palma reminded the body that two years ago we were in agreement that after two terms the position should go to Canada, alternating back and forth between Canada and the United States. All were in agreement.

Under Old Business, Deacon Cambre gave a report on the 2007 Convocation to be held in Toronto July 27,28 & 29 at the Scarborough Campus of the University of Toronto. The theme is 'The Pastoral Constitution on the Church.' Four workshops will be offered on the weekend. Saturday night there will be a dinner show by the Famous People Players. The cost is expected to be about \$250.00 +/- per person. Deacon Cambre will send Deacon Palma information to be publicized on the front page of the Region II Newsletter. There is a concern that the NY Archdiocese is the only one that did not send mailing labels. Deacon Cambre will contact Deacon Cassaneto about this.

Under New Business there was a discussion about the Chicago planning meeting and the NADD Conference to be held in LA in April 2007. Deacon May handed out the tentative budget for NADD for next year. The final one should be mailed to all members prior to the April meeting.

A tentative schedule of the April meeting in LA was handed out.

[There was a discussion about the Lily Foundation Emerging Models Program. The summit meeting will be held in Orlando, a combined conference of the six organizations involved in the program. NADD is one of the organizations.](#)

The final discussion of the meeting was about the new Director's Institute. All present agreed that the cost of sending a man to it, more that \$2,000.00 was excessive.

The meeting was closed for the night and resumed on Friday morning with Deacon Ray Duplechain giving his very informative presentation on Inquiry & Aspirancy.