

# REGION II NEWS

Volume 4 Issue 1

Fall 2009

## Dioceses of Region II

### **New York State:**

Buffalo  
Brooklyn  
New York  
Ogdensburg  
Rochester  
Rockville Center  
Syracuse

### **Canada:**

Hamilton  
Kingston  
London  
Ottawa  
St. Catharines  
Sault Ste. Marie  
Toronto

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## **Archdiocese of Toronto**

### ***Deacon does 'the right thing' to save nun's life***

**BY Jim O'Leary  
The Catholic Register**

You never know what you'll spot in the parish bulletin. One Sunday last summer Deacon Michael Hayes read a plea from a woman seeking a liver donor to save her critically ill sister. He put down the bulletin, booted up his computer and sent an e-mail to his pastor.

He wrote a simple message: "I have a Catholic liver and anybody is welcome to it."

Thus began an incredible journey in which Hayes volunteered to have 70 per cent of his liver removed and transplanted into a stranger who turned out to be a Toronto nun. The deacon saved the nun and in the process became a walking example of Christian stewardship and an unwitting spokesman for an important cause.

The story began in South Africa in 1997, seven years before Hayes was ordained, when Sr. Bridget Nazareth was diagnosed with primary billiary cirrhosis and told she would need a liver transplant within eight years. She was 43. Eight years came and went and, although Sr. Bridget's condition worsened, she continued to work as a chaplain, and in 2006 became manager of chaplaincy

for the archdiocese of Toronto. But by February, 2008, her liver was in full revolt, the pain was excruciating, and, needing constant care, she was finally placed on the liver transplant list.

She joined 325 other people on the list and was introduced to the sad reality that, due to an insufficient number of donors, someone in Ontario dies every three days awaiting an organ transplant. But unlike such primary organs as kidneys, hearts and lungs, a liver can regenerate, which opens the possibility of live donors. Sr. Bridget was advised to seek a live donor among family and friends, but for various physical and compatibility reasons none was found.

"It seemed hopeless, really," she said. "When you first get on the list you say to yourself, 'Oh, good, I'm finally on the list.' But then they tell you to try to find your own donor."

By the summer of 2008 her condition was critical. As Sr. Bridget puts it, she had become so sick she wasn't even able to pray. It was then that permission was granted to seek a donor through parish bulletins. No one knew what to expect. Would people respond to a request to donate a large portion of a vital organ, to undergo a serious operation, in order to save the life of a stranger?

To the amazement and eternal gratitude of Sr. Bridget, who would have been thankful for just

one volunteer, seven stepped forward. "God showed me the generosity of people," she said. Hayes was the first to contact her, or, as he put it, "I beat the others to the punch."

"I remember that I saw the notice in the bulletin and I said to myself, 'I want to do this. I should do this.' I thought it was the right thing to do," he said.

At the time, the deacon had no idea that he'd be saving a nun. He smiles now recalling the moment he found out. "I thought that was very interesting," he said. "I mean, what are the odds? A deacon and a nun." Hayes, who serves both St. Patrick's parish in Markham and Good Shepherd parish in Thornhill, is a four-time marathoner who still runs regularly.

The cutoff age for live liver donors is 60; Hayes beat the deadline by four months. Humility told him he should remain silent about the gift of life he bestowed on a stranger, but he was persuaded by St. Patrick's pastor Fr. Michael Machacek and others to share his story to promote the need for live donors.

"I would have kept it a secret," he said. "But I'm OK with this."

Prospective donors usually undergo a three-month, intensive process of physical and emotional screening to assess their suitability for surgery. But due to Sr. Bridget's critical condition Hayes' assessment was condensed into three weeks under the direction of Cailin MacLeod, RN, at Toronto General Hospital. Typically, just one

in four volunteers is a suitable donor. The first test is a simple blood screen and it showed Hayes was a perfect match. Other tests confirmed his compatibility. He was apprised of the risks and given data showing an infinitesimal fatality rate - a fraction of one per cent - for live liver donors.

"I was happy to be a match," Hayes said. "Sure, I had some apprehension, but the biggest thing I was nervous about was that the recipient might die before all the tests were complete."

Hayes had the full support of his wife, Dawn, and their two daughters. "He's always been the type to just jump in," said Dawn, who has also signed on to become a live donor. "I was nervous and proud . . . and I checked the

life insurance," she joked.

Days before the surgery, though, Hayes would have a brief rebellion against doctors' advice. He was at the hospital when he heard that Sr. Bridget was having a particularly difficult day. Donors and recipients are generally prohibited from meeting. "I just went and saw her even though I wasn't supposed to," he said. "It seemed like the right thing to do."

They prayed together for a few minutes and it lifted the spirits of Sr. Bridget. "I was happy to be able to meet him," she said. "He assured me everything would be all right and that if we relied on prayer things would be OK."

Twenty-two days after the notice in the Sunday bulletin, Hayes was on the operating table at Toronto General Hospital. Among the last words he heard before going under were from a doctor giving him a last chance to back out, "There was not one moment where I wanted to change my mind," he said. His surgery lasted five hours; Sr. Bridget's a bit longer. Both operations went smoothly.

But Hayes was back in surgery a few days later for a repair and spent a short time in intensive care, but otherwise he says his convalescence has been easier than he thought. He was off work for five weeks. After five weeks a liver will regenerate to 90 per cent of its original capacity and should be at 100 per cent in 12 weeks.

Sr. Bridget's convalescence has been more difficult. She is still being watched closely for infections and requires draining tubes to assist the natural functions of the liver. But her sense of humour remains strong.

"Everyone says that Jesus is your constant companion," she smiles, "but for me my constant companion is my tubes and medication."

The deacon and the nun have become good friends. "We talk every week like we're old buddies," said Hayes.

"I marvel at what he did for me," said Sr. Bridget. And at Hayes' 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party earlier this year they shared the spotlight. "They wished me happy birthday, too," said Sr. Bridget, smiling, setting up the punch line, "because I have his liver. I owe him my life."



Deacon Hayes and Sr. Bridget

## ***Diocese of St. Catherines***

### **Deacon Couples – Mystics for today**

**By Deacon George Newman**

In my years of formation and as a formator, I have noticed how deacon couples become more spiritual, more prayerful, and more active in the community because of their involvement in Diaconia. Recently in a course on Mystical Theology, the idea of the deacon being in the image of a Mystic began to develop. It occurred to me that the definition of Mystic that was developing in my consciousness was because the lifestyle of the deacon couple closely mirrored that of many of the great Mystics.

My own idea that a Mystic was someone apart or separated from society began to break down as I realized that many of the people we call Mystics were called to that state in the same way that all of us are called into the mystery of God's love through our baptism. As I compared their lifestyle, I began to see the mystic of today is very similar, in-as-much as they are persons who work to support their family or community, pray on a regular basis, and work in areas of service and ministry to bring about the Kingdom of God. This is verified in the definition and explanation of Mysticism given in Part VII and chapter XXVIII of *Catholicism* by Richard McBrien. "Mysticism is the graced transformation of consciousness that follows upon a direct or immediate experience of the presence of God leading to deeper union with God". Balanced spirituality insists on a connection between "the

experience of God as the presence within, and the experience of God as the presence in others and in the signs of the times", and "mysticism is always oriented to union with God issuing in service to others". During formation the candidate and his wife experience many moments of God's grace breaking into their lives with a resulting increase in prayer and dedication to service.

The three attributes of a Mystic that seemed most relevant were their dedication to work, their ongoing prayer life, and the work in ministry to bring about God's Kingdom. This definition is well suited to the lifestyle of the deacon couple since they are both involved in the support of their families, spend regular time in prayer, and go out to the world in ministry situations with the intention of spreading the good news of the gospel and actively bringing about the Kingdom of God in their family, in their workplace and in their chosen ministry.

If we look at who today fits the definition of Mystic that we inherited from church teaching, we can easily identify such notables as Mother Theresa, Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen and John Paul II. However on closer examination and in light of McBrien, we could easily identify that the deacon couple is the model of Mystic most evident in our own community. As I continue to work with deacon candidates and their wives, I am more and more convinced that rather than a disappearance of the Mystic from society, we are experiencing a renewal of Mystical activity through the growth of the diaconate and especially through the joint activity of the deacon and his wife.

#### **SPECIAL DISCOUNT EXTENDED**

The Deacon Outfitters of Biddeford, Maine, will extend 10% off discount if you enter "Region II Convocation" in the Comment box at [www.deaconoutfitters.com](http://www.deaconoutfitters.com)  
They have gift ideas for wives too.

## *Diocese of Rochester*

### *2009 Convocation of Permanent Deacons of Region II*



Bishop Matthew Clark greets deacons and wives at the Cathedral.



Deacon Bert Cambre (NADD Region II Board Representative) opens the 2009 Convocation.



Reception at the Cathedral after Mass.





Fr. William Sheehan the main keynote speaker for the Region II Convocation makes a point.

## ***Region II Directors' Meeting***

### **Minutes NADD Region II Directors' Meeting – Rochester Convocation July 31, 2009 11:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Bill Gervais, Dave Palma, Ted and Dorothy May, John and Susan Vallely, Bert and Terry Cambre, Nick and Theresa Cherri, Greg Feary, Kevin and Kathy Mastellon.

#### **Next Convocation**

We discussed again the frequency, and it was generally agreed and confirmed that to ensure good attendance we do the convocation every two years. The attendance has been hovering

around 150/160 in the recent past, so we would expect that number of people at the next one as well. Bill Gervais stated that Kingston was pleased to host the next Convocation on August 5, 6, and 7, 2011. He further explained that the facilities at their Spirituality Centre would be adequate to hold the meeting.

David Palma said that the seed money would be sent to Kingston by November, 2009.

#### **2012 NADD Convocation**

Bert informed the group that Archbishop Thomas Collins had written to Deacon Sam Anzalone inviting NADD to hold the annual Convention in Toronto, reminding him that it has been 25 years since Toronto held it in 1984. Invitation and response were handed out.

### **Proposed Changes to NADD's name**

Ted May read his proposed letter and it was approved unchanged by all the directors. The letter was then sent. Copy of letter was provided.

### **Financial Report**

Bert Cambre reported that Region II has on hand \$2,637.16 CAD, having received \$788.48 in membership dues.

### **International Diaconate Centre**

Bert Cambre gave a brief report on the IDC and circulated the first two copies of "New Diaconate Review".

### **Fall Directors' Meeting**

Our traditional fall meeting was discussed and

its scheduling confirmed for November 10, 11, 2009. Ted May verified that we can meet again at Christ the King Seminary as last year, arriving on November 10<sup>th</sup> and departing on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

The cost of the room is \$25.00 per person (single room). If you arrive for dinner on the 10<sup>th</sup>, the cost is \$8.00 per person, but Ted May must be advised in advance. Breakfast cost is \$5.00 and lunch is \$6.50 per person.

### **Other**

David Palma renewed his request for articles for the Region II Newsletter from the dioceses. At the present time he only has an article from Toronto. We discussed the use of our banners during the convocation but decided not to use them this time since there were several dioceses that had not brought them.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

## ***Diocese of Syracuse***

### ***Notes***

#### **By Deacon Les Distin**

Forty-two Deacons and several wives attended the installation of Bishop Robert J. Cunningham in May. Our new Ordinary extended an invitation to the Deacon Community to a luncheon meeting on June 27<sup>t</sup> and eighty-six members attended. It was a special occasion, and the Community extends a warm welcome to our Bishop, pledging him our Diaconal service.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared a "Year for Priest" in celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 'dies natalis' of St. John Vianney, the Patron Saint of Priests. The Holy Father wrote the following: "It was his fervent prayer life and his impassioned love of Christ Crucified that enabled John Mary Vianney to grow daily in his total self-

oblation to God and the Church. May his example lead all priests to offer that witness of unity with their bishop, with one another and with the lay faithful, which today, as ever, is so necessary. Despite all the evil present in our world, the words which Christ spoke to His Apostles in the Upper Room continue to inspire us: 'In the world you have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world'. Our faith in the Divine Master gives us the strength to look to the future with confidence. Dear priests, Christ is counting on you. In the footsteps of the Cure of Ars, let yourselves be enthralled by Him. In this way you too will be, for the world in our time, heralds of hope, reconciliation and peace".

Let us all pray for our priests that they may be renewed and strengthened in this time of change and challenge.

