

REGION II NEWS

Volume 2 Issue 1

Summer 2006

CONVOCATION 2006

Dioceses of Region II

New York State:

- Buffalo
- New York
- Ogdensburg
- Rochester
- Rockville Center
- Syracuse

Canada:

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

Region II Diaconate Convocation

By Deacon Ted May

This past July 21, 22 & 23, the Deacons and wives of Region II gathered together for Convocation in Newburgh, New York. It was 3 years since they last had an opportunity to do so. One year it was cancelled by the SARS epidemic, which hit Toronto. Another year no diocese was able to hold it.

Region II has normally been made up of the (Arch) dioceses of New York State. For various reasons, all but the Dioceses of Albany and Brooklyn are

in it today. Due to the relationship with The National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD), and the fact that many of the Canadian Diaconate Directors have joined the NADD, the dioceses of Ontario, Canada have now become part of Region II for the Permanent Diaconate.

The convocation was held at Mount St. Mary College overlooking the Hudson River a short distance north of New York City. About 45 deacons along with men in diaconate formation, most with their wives, attended the 3-day event. The theme of the conference was *"The Deacon, the* (Continued on Page -2)

Inside this issue:

<i>Region II Convocation</i>	1
<i>Summer 2006</i>	
<i>Ogdensburg</i>	2
<i>Syracuse</i>	3
<i>Rochester</i>	4
<i>Directors' Meeting</i>	6



His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan presides at Sunday Liturgy.

Parish, and the Church's Preferential Love for the Poor."

On Friday, July 21, since many had traveled long distances, the conference started slowly with the attendees gathering for Liturgy. Dinner followed and then many came together for a get-acquainted social. The following day, Rev. Raymond Kemp, Director of Preaching the Just Word, gave a keynote address. Fr. Kemp spoke about biblical justice and how God's justice is displayed in creation, covenant, spirituality and life. He went on to propose the question to us; "What are the issues of justice/injustice that face us where we minister?"

The afternoon had us break down into workshops covering some of the situations we find ourselves in when we minister to the people, in particular those who are poor in so many ways. Late in the afternoon, tours were available to either a winery or on a cruise on the Hudson River.

Sunday morning we celebrated Liturgy

with His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan presiding. Cardinal Egan's homily showed us how the Sunday Gospel from Mark 6:30-34, related to us when we find that we must minister to those who come to us, even when we are tired and seeking rest. Cardinal Egan then spent more than an hour with us in a friendly social atmosphere.

The conference ended with another keynote address by Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J., who became Editor-in-Chief of *America* magazine in the Fall of 2005. He spoke on non-violence and just war. He noted that peace is not the mere absence of war. He also told us that the paradox of promoting peace often brings one to violence, as all do not agree how to do it. He noted that it is important that we persevere in prayer, and that the deacon must be ready to lead prayer, especially in crisis.

The Region II Convocation next summer is scheduled in Toronto, Ontario on July 27, 28 & 29, 2007.



His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan and Rev. Drew Christiansen, S. J.

Diocese of Ogdensburg

Notes from the North Country

The 2006-2007 school year will see the full implementation of the diocese's new deacon formation program. For the past year, the aspirants have been taking online courses through the STEP program at the University of Notre Dame. In addition, they have participated in an annual retreat, have completed their psychological screening, and are in the process of participating in the Deacon Perceiver Interview process.

Kelly Counseling and Consulting from Glen Mills, PA, came onsite to the diocese to conduct the psychological screening for all of the aspirants. Several weeks later they returned to give each aspirant the feedback of their findings. The diocese found that this arrangement was able to afford both the aspirants and the diocese with outstanding psychological screening.

In September, the aspirants will have a

monthly twenty-four hour session at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg. Their courses will be Liturgy Formation, The Gospels, Introduction to Spirituality, Introduction to Catechetics, and Public Speaking. At the same time, the aspirants will continue to pursue online courses through the STEP program.

The partnership with STEP has proven to be beneficial for the aspirants. Likewise, it has allowed a diocese in a rural setting to provide appropriate theological formation for the deacon aspirants. It is expected that the candidates will pursue online courses over the four-year period.

Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin will continue to be in charge of the Deacon Formation Program. However, since he is taking on a new assignment as Principal of Seton Catholic High School in Plattsburgh, NY, Msgr. Aucoin will no longer be Director of Permanent Deacons. Fr. James W Seymour, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, will take on this responsibility.

Diocese of Syracuse

DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM FOR WIVES

PURPOSE: to provide for wives a prayerful environment, classroom presentations, opportunities for sharing and individual mentoring to encourage them to examine the roles and responsibilities incumbent upon the spouse of a permanent deacon.

OBJECTIVES: 1. Assist in individual discernment and internalization of the benefits and burdens of the permanent diaconate... 2. To assess the impact of the DFP and post ordination demands on family time and interrelationships... 3. To develop a personal spirituality and prayer life based on guided introspection... 4. To identify sources for support and growth available to wives and families... 5. To share concerns and establish a sense of participation in the deacon community... 6. To review contemporary issues and establish a

relevant knowledge base of the twenty first century Church... 7. To assess and anticipate changes in relationships and expectations within the parish community.

PROGRAM: Classes consist of joint meetings with husbands as well as a series of at least four all day meetings exclusively for wives. Two multiple day retreats are required during years two and four. Wives are also encouraged to attend classes with their spouses.

The all day classes include presentations by deacon wives, priests, religious and lay people who have expertise in fields related to the objectives. Each class includes an opportunity for sharing concerns and experiences related to the DFP. The participants are asked to complete evaluations of each class and to make suggestions for topics and presenters. The Liaison meets privately with each participant annually. Confidentiality is assured.

NOTE: The wives in the advanced class are very helpful to the beginners and the total group meetings have been productive. However, during the second year/ fourth year con-

figuration it would be beneficial to spend part of each class in separated sessions. This will provide an opportunity to focus on the unique needs and concerns of each group during these critical points in the Program.

A Personal Observation: It has been a privilege for me to have been part of the faith journey with each of the wives in the DFP for the past twelve years. I have had the exceptional opportunity to share the anxieties, the unknowns, the joys and the satisfactions of these women who quietly support diaconal ministries through a variety of ways and sacrifices and who graciously share their husbands with the people of the Church of the Diocese of Syracuse.

Gratefully,

Lucy

Lucy Distin

May, 2006

Diocese of Rochester

Numerous calls fill deacon's life

By Deacon Larry Feasel

From the *Catholic Courier*
Copyright May 3, 2006, Rochester Catholic Press
Association, Inc.

Reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

Callings — most of us experience at least one of these in a lifetime. Depending on our ages, the sources may be parents, teachers,

friends, situations, readings, spouses, fellow parishioners and even inner stirring. My first sense of call came in eighth grade at St. Ambrose School. Sister Rita Marie encouraged all her boys to pray for a vocation to the priesthood. I prayed, but neither heard nor felt a call. So off I went to McQuaid and there felt the first call in my life. My American history teacher witnessed what it is to be an educator. My decision to be a teacher of history was forged. When I arrived at John Carroll University, I discovered that my history major and political science minor

would include Army ROTC and a *de facto* third minor in philosophy. So my second call to serve as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army was also forged. After graduate school and a tour in Vietnam, I married my wonderful wife, Anne (a third calling) and entered the world of an educator at Monroe Community College. It was a marvelous 36-year ride there during which our three blessed children — Larry, Kathy and Justin — formed my fourth calling.

Anne and I were always active in St. Joseph's, Penfield, as lectors, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion and members of the folk group. The stirring of the fifth calling — the permanent diaconate — came from four sources. First, we were blessed with the witness of three great deacons at St. Joseph's — Bill Hunt, Ken Scarciotta and Tom Ecker. Further, in the Army Reserve I interacted with another gifted deacon — Gary DiLallo. Second, there was the support of four inspiring priests — Father Mike Conboy, the pastor who encouraged and endorsed my candidacy; Father Joe Hart, my academic adviser for three years; Father John Colacino, the adviser for my last year; and Father Bill Darling, my spiritual director. Third, there were the affirming parishioners at St. Joseph's. And fourth, certainly not last, my family and friends. All of these interacted to awaken, nurture and support my sense of calling. Then there were the prayers of so many. As a result, the four years at St. Bernard's were a whirlwind of faith, ideas, service and opportunities.

I was ordained June 9, 1999, and a month later was assigned to St. Salome's Parish and to the duty chaplaincy at Rochester General Hospital. The six years and 11 months since ordination have been profoundly rewarding. With the support of two pastors, Father Darling and Father Richard Beligotti, and the faith community of St. Salome's, I have received the marriage vows of 18 couples, baptized 64 children, and presided or assisted at the funerals for 34. All this in the parish which is the mustard seed of the Irondequoit parishes! At the hospital, I have supported and prayed with patients and

families beyond counting. I never cease to be amazed and thankful for how open and candid they are in their time of need. Health emergencies most always bring on a faith crisis. In a perfect world, all patients would have health-care proxies and have received the sacrament of the sick in their parishes before entering the hospital. But this is an imperfect world and provides the challenge for ministerial support in the hospital setting. It also is my privilege to sponsor field-education experiences for deacon candidates at Rochester General, shadowing for diaconal inquirers and mentorship for deacon interns. And in January 2005, I became the chaplain for the Monroe County Office of Probation and Community Services.

Serving as a permanent deacon is a privilege without measure. Whether preparing a couple for marriage or caring for a parishioner who has lost a job, visiting the sick or assisting a family in preparing a funeral liturgy, breaking open the meaning and message of sacred Scripture in a homily or delivering food baskets to the needy — all are manifestations of his love for which you are his agent. Occasionally, you are a channel of his peace. One last note: I can't begin to describe how it feels to receive the wedding vows of your children and baptize your grandchildren (yes, the sixth calling!).

(Deacon Laurence Feasel ministers at St. Salome Parish in Irondequoit and Rochester General Hospital, and is professor emeritus of criminal justice, history and political science at Monroe Community College.)



Summary of the Region II Directors' Meeting of Thursday/Friday July 20/21, 2006:

At Mount St. Mary College
Newburgh, New York

- Present at the meeting were Deacon Bert Cambre, Toronto; Deacon Anthony Cassaneto, New York; Deacon Claude Curtin, Rochester; Deacon Leslie Distin, Syracuse; Deacon John Ezard, Kingston; Deacon William Gervais, Kingston; Deacon Ted May, Buffalo; and Deacon David Palma, Rochester. A number of wives were also present.
- Deacon Cassaneto first spoke about the Convocation opening the next day, noting some changes and commenting on logistics. He said that he had a fair sized crew aiding him. He requested the services of Deacon Directors to serve at Mass and to lead the Morning and Evening Prayer.
- Deacon Cambre then spoke about the 2007 Convocation that will be held in Toronto, Ontario on July 27, 28 & 29. He noted that Deacon Bill Ditewig has already committed to speak at it. He requested that each of the Deacon Directors send him three sets of mailing labels to be used for sending advertisements and notices. Deacon May is to contact NDICE to get future Institute dates so that we can arrange our Convocations without conflicting with them.
- Deacon May announced that Rev. Jay Seymour has been named the Director of the Diaconate for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Rev. Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin will continue as Director of Formation.
- Deacon Palma spoke about the next issue of the Region II Newsletter that he hopes to get out soon. He requested that articles and pictures should be sent in by August 15th, and the issue would then come out 5 to 7 days later. The Newsletter would be e-mailed to the Directors of the Diocese, and they would be responsible for distributing it either by e-mail or hard copy.
- At this point, because many were tired from travel, we closed the meeting with Night Prayer led by Deacon May.
- The following morning we met, to discuss a future Directors' meeting. Deacon Palma is going to check on the availability of facilities on a tentative date of November 9-10, 2006. He will also try to get Deacon Jim Swiler, the Director in New Orleans to do a presentation on Inquiry and Aspirancy as he did in Denver at NADD.
- Some discussions were held on what is happening in our dioceses, and this presented opportunities for Deacons to send articles to Deacon Palma for the Newsletter.



Deacons and Wives enjoy a meal at the Convocation