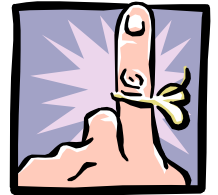


C OMMUNITY C OMMUNICATIONS

March 2005

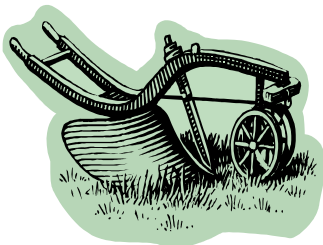


A communication tool for the Deacon community of the Roman Catholic Diocese of



Reminder: Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection

The Livingston and Washtenaw Clusters each have cancelled their regular monthly meeting in March to encourage people to attend the Day of Prayer and Reflection. Fr. Doug Osborn, in recognition of the Year of the Eucharist, has chosen The Eucharist and the Deacon for the theme of our **3rd Annual Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection** for the deacons, candidates and wives. Plan on joining the deacon community on **MARCH 12** at St. John Vianney Parish in Flint for what will be a wonderful, spiritually uplifting day. There are not many opportunities to gather as a community to pray together, so don't miss out on this one! More information is available from the Office of Deacons .



Plowshares of Hope – A Lenten Reflection

By David B. Rosenberg

Ash Wednesday 2005

“If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday” Isaiah 58:10

Inside This Issue:

- 3 Lent: The Favorable Time
- 4 Formation Opportunities
- 5 Spring Lectures
- 6 Are you keeping up with me?
- 7 Prayer Line Cluster Meetings
- 8 Dates and More
- 9 Lent
- 10 Pax Christi

We are frequently confronted with the questioning of our inner heart – yearnings to leave our mark on this earth. This Lent, I propose we reflect on past encounters with the “salt of the earth” – those unsung heroes that we have met, but perhaps failed to recognize for the good deeds they had done. We need not search far to find evidence of the indelible marks that Christ, through these simple folks, has placed on our hearts. In our prayers of blessing let us not forget to recognize the “salt of the earth.” Then give prayerful consideration that there really is no single Great Good we do, but rather small good things, done in His name with GREAT love.

Jesus compares us to salt in the gospels. In the Gospel of Matthew 5:13 he states, “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?” It leaves us to ponder the question, what does it mean to be the “salt of the earth.” I am reminded of a story of two men. One is a great author, the

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Newsletter on-line at: <http://parishesonline.com/>

Lansing Deacons on-line at: <http://parishesonline.com/>

Plowshares of Hope

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other a complete unknown. One we know his name and story very well; of the other we know nothing. The famous one, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970. He was born in 1918 in Russia, and was destined to suffer the consequences of the great wars of the Twentieth Century.

Because of his writings, he was sentenced to the Siberian prisoner work camps. These camps were located in the bleakest, most deprived part of Russia. In this region there is always a cold chill in the air, and the sun seldom shines. The men sentenced to this camp were given a single workman's tool, a "spade" shaped shovel.

After years of being worked literally to death, he simply could endure no more. One day he leaned on his spade and watched the gray clouds drag sullenly across the sky. A merciless wind tore at him through his prison garb. He felt as though it penetrated his soul. Every one of his muscles and bones ached. Hunger gnawed his stomach. Years of hard labor in the Siberian work camp had ruined his health and stripped him of hope.

With resolution for the inevitable, he dropped his spade, left the work gang, and sat on a bench nearby. Soon a guard would command him to return to work. When he ignored the order, the guard would beat him to death with his own spade. He'd seen it happen many times. A quick bloody death today, thought Aleksandr, would be better than a slow death in a bleak, empty future.

He stared at the ground and waited. Soon he heard footsteps and braced himself in anticipation of the blow that would follow. But when he raised his eyes, instead of a guard, he saw a gaunt, elderly prisoner standing before him. The old man said nothing, but knelt in front of Solzhenitsyn. With his spade, the very tool that was to be the instrument of death, he imprinted its heart-like shape in the dirt and in the center of the heart-shaped imprint, scratched the sign of the cross. Without a word, he then hurried back to work.

Solzhenitsyn looked at the cross, and as he reflected on it, a ray of light penetrated his thoughts. In that moment his perspective changed radically. He realized that he did not have to face the evil of the gulag and the Soviets on his own diminished strength. With the power of the cross, he could withstand the evil of not one but a thousand Soviet empires. None of his external circumstances changed that day, but internally the light given to him by that elderly "salt of the earth" man had blessed him with the grace of hope.

From this powerful conversion, Solzhenitsyn came to believe that the struggle between good and evil would not be resolved among parties, classes or doctrines, but would be waged within the individual human heart.

I have reread Matthew's scripture of salt and light many times over the past several weeks. And the story of Aleksandr and the old man resonate with me in my daily meditations. I am also reminded of my great grandfather Shragal,

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The following is part of the text of an address Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor gave this Ash Wednesday during vespers in Westminster Cathedral.

By tradition Lent is a time of giving up and doing without; no sooner are we over the shock of our credit card bills after Christmas, the Church asks us to undertake an annual "holy fast." We live out a penance, like a daily hair shirt constantly pricking us. This is why the 40 days of Lent seem to pass so slowly. Will it never be Easter Day ☐☐ when I can take up my daily habit again!

But this is a very grim way to go about Lent. The Church does not intend it to seem interminable; Lent, in a sense, ought to pass like a flash with a sense of desperate urgency. "Here we are, two weeks into the 40 days and how little there is to show for it!" It is a time of intense focus: Lent is a Christian way of expressing the brief life we live here on earth, a life of probation without a moment we can afford to waste.

No wonder St. Paul, in the reading of today, gives us an ultimatum. He says, "We beg you, once again, not to neglect the grace of God that we have received. Now is the favorable time. This is the day of salvation." Time narrows over the next 40 days, because we become conscious of the bigger drama of life, a drama that ends with death. Ash Wednesday, today, helps us to focus. The ash is put on our foreheads, and the priest says, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return." The space in between is extraordinarily important, because it prepares us for the new life which we celebrate at Easter. And that new life is the path to our eternal salvation.

So if people ask me what they should do for Lent, I am inclined to say, on this Ash Wednesday, you should not try to do without something, but to get something done as if your eternal salvation depended on it. If Lent is to mean anything in our lives, it has to be a season of renewal. The word "Lent" itself means "springtime." The idea is that we die with Christ like the seed in the ground and rise with Him to more abundant life. We die to sin and rise to integrity. We die to selfishness and rise to generosity, especially towards the poor.

Whatever penance we do, whatever we choose to give up or do without, should help us to put on these new clothes, and to grow into stronger, healthier Christians. Each one of us should spend more time in prayer during these 40 days; some time in reading a Lenten book about how better to follow Jesus Christ, and some exercise which involves care for others, perhaps a visit to someone less fortunate than we are. What we should give up is whatever stops us doing that extra thing.

from Zenit News Service



Formation Calendar

Date	Place	Third Year	First Year
March 5	St. Thomas East Lansing	Assisting at Mass Homilies	Homiletics
April 9	Diocesan Center	Final Ordination Planning Homilies	Ministry
April 29 - May 1	Bethany House – DeWitt	Pre Ordination Retreat Michael Fonseca - Retreat Director	
May 7	Diocesan Center		First Homilies

All Sessions are 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Other Important Dates

March 25, 2005	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	St. Agnes - Fowlerville
Sr. Donna Markham - Culture or Faith/Culture and Faith		
March 12, 2005	9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	St. John Vianney - Flint
Deacon Community Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection Rev. Doug Osborn		
March 24, 2005	10:30 a.m.	St. Mary Cathedral
Chrism Mass		
May 14, 2005	10:00 a.m.	St. Mary Cathedral
Deacon Ordination		
June 11, 2005	10:30 a.m.	St. Mary Cathedral
Priest Ordination		

Directory Updates

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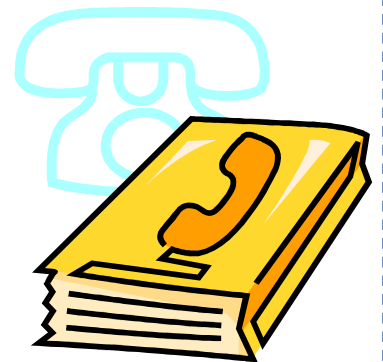
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Plowshares of Hope

(Continued from page 2)

who immigrated to this country from Eastern Europe. He, too, had a spade. I remember being with him once in the early spring. Before he started planting the fields of his farm in Illinois, he took the spade and imprinted its heart shape in the soil. He then took a sprinkle of salt and mixed it with the earth, and carved the sign of the cross in the soil's heart-shaped imprint. He humbly submitted his being to prayer, hat in hand, asking Our Lord to bestow his graces. He was always most grateful for the abundant blessings the good earth provided for him and his family. And he would frequently renew his vow to live a simple and humble life, and offer up his life to be the "salt of the earth" for those that crossed his path.

Even as I sit here I can close my eyes and be transported across space and time, finding myself in that field standing next to him. Then, in the blink of an eye, I find myself in our church facing the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The shape of the spade, and the sacred heart co-mingle as one image. And in that moment, I know Christ truly does guide us to do his good work, but only if we submit ourselves, as did Aleksandr, the old man, and my great grandfather, to be salt of the earth for others. In his name, our daily acts bring the light of Christ in small, simple, yet profound ways. And by doing his will, we, too, are guided in his ways to soften and reshape those tools of despair that imprison mankind, and turn those tools into plowshares of hope.

May Our Lord bless you and keep you. And may you find renewal of spirit through your Lenten Journey of His Passion, death on the cross, and Easter Resurrection!

"Ora et Labora"

Spring Lecture Series 2005



"The Church and Public Life"

Corpus Christi University Parish, 2955 Dorr Street, Toledo, Ohio 43607-3023.
 Tuesday evenings, Lecture: 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Question Period 6:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
 For additional information, please call 419-531-4992

- March 29 **The Church and Politics: Guidance from John Courtney Murray**
 James Bacik Pastor, Corpus Christi University Parish
- April 5 **The Communion of Saints: A Vision of the Church Bound to the World**
 Richard Gaillardetz Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies, University of Toledo
- April 12 **Margaret O'Brien Steinfels**
 Former Editor, Commonweal Magazine
- April 19 **Terms of Engagement: The Nature of the Redemption**
 Monika Hellwig President, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
- April 26 **Michael Himes**
 Professor of Theology, Boston College
- May 3 **Reflections of a Vatican Correspondent**
 John Allen, Jr. Vatican Correspondent, National Catholic Reporter

Are You Keeping Up With Me, Lord?

By Tom Franklin

Are you keeping up with me, Jesus? I find myself rushing about, evaluating whether or not I can find five or ten minutes to be alone with you – and this is just plain nuts! I remember reading a book which You arranged to send my way sometime in the last century – it was called “Are you running with me, Jesus?” – and I swore to you back then that I’d never fall into that trap – but here I am, Lord, I’ve come to *do* your will rather than *be* your Presence, and it is your Presence through which your will is done..

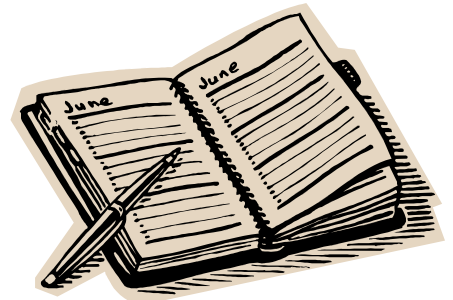


As I sit before you, I have a “to do” list for you to action. Oh, every item is worthy of your attention and perhaps needs your hand, but what a ludicrous thing I am doing – prioritizing you, who are my God.

Help me, Lord, to be your Presence, so that those to whom you have sent to me see not me, but see you. Let it be your hands they feel rather than mine, your voice they hear

Convocation 2005

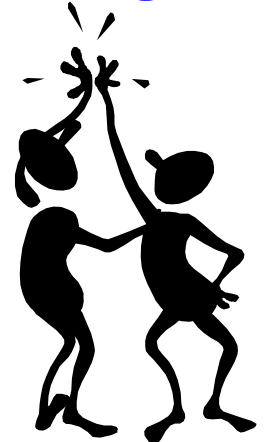
Mark your calendars to reserve the weekend of October 7-9, 2005 for the next deacon community convocation to be held at Boyne Mountain in their luxurious Mountain Grand Lodge. Adjacent to this new facility is Avalanche Bay, an indoor water park. More details on the convocation will be forthcoming.



KUDOS

Congratulations!

Did you read the March-April issue of Deacon Digest? Not one but two members of our community have published articles in the issue. You must read **Joy Franklin**’s touching “Night Prayer” on page 22. And **Marv Robertson**’s article on page 30, “When Marriage and Diaconate Collide,” is excellent and thought provoking. Thank you both Joy and Marv for bringing such honor to our Lans-



For the sick:

Judy Barrett
 Jack Daunt
 Sue Daunt
 Betty Garber
 Patricia Guarnaccia
 Vince Guarnaccia
 Jim Hashman
 Elizabeth Poole

For those who have died:

Deacon Bob Poulson

Necrology

March

1	Agnes Boehmer	1969
10	Deacon Gwynn McPeck (Mac)	2002
18	Louise Chadwick	1973
25	Deacon Richard Cesarz	1988
25	Pauline Pizana	1983

April

27	Deacon Robert Boehmer	1974
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Community Prayer Line

Pre-Ordination Retreat

The seven men to be ordained this year, and their wives, will be making their pre ordination retreat at St. Francis Retreat Center April 29-May 1. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue to pray and discern their call to Holy Orders.

Deacon Ordination 2005

Be sure to mark your calendars to attend the **Deacon Ordination in the Cathedral, May 14th**. You remember what a special day this was for you so come and welcome these seven men into the sacramental fraternity of the Order of Deacons. We will vest in alb and white stole (your ordination stole would be appropriate), process in and sit as a body for the ordination. There will be reserved seating for the wives of the deacons.

Genesee/Owosso Cluster

Place: Little Joe's Restaurant
Grand Blanc

Date: April 4

Time: 6:00 PM

Contact: Gary Gallagher

Other Details:

Jackson/Lenawee/Hillsdale Cluster

Place: Blissfield Coney Island

Date: TBD

Time: Noon

Contact: Carol or Linda Franssen

Other Details:

Lansing Cluster

Place: St. Gerard—Lansing

Date: April 15

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Contact: T. Fleming, D. Stanford,

Ed or Florence Schneider

Other Details:

Livingston Cluster

Place: McDonald's Home

Date: April 16

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Contact: D. Piggot, Pat or Peg

McDonald

Other Details:

Washtenaw Cluster

Place: Guy Hollaran's

Date: April 9

Time: 9:45 a.m.

Contact: W. Hecht or T. Franklin

Other Details: Mass at Christ the

King at 9:00 a.m.

Cluster Meetings

Castelot Summer Scripture

Monday June 13—Thursday June 16, 2005

St. John Center Plymouth, MI

Paul as a Model for Pastoral Ministry

Ronal D. Witherup, SS

Gospel Parables

Barbara Reid, OP

Navigating Narrative: Some Practical Hints for Reading Biblical Stories

Jerome Walsh

Look for a brochure in early 2005

For information call 313-237-5954



Chrism Mass



The Mass with the Rites of Blessing of Oils and Consecration of the Chrism at the Cathedral will be celebrated at the Cathedral on Holy Thursday, March 24. The deacons of the Lansing diocese are invited to vest, process in and sit as a body that day. Bring your alb and a white stole (your ordination stole would be nice). Plan to arrive at the Diocesan Center, Madonna Hall, no later than 10:00 a.m. You may want arrive earlier as parking is always at a premium for the Chrism Mass. Following instructions and prayer, we will pre-process to the Cathedral at 10:15 a.m. After the Chrism Mass there will be a luncheon in St. Mary Hall. It is important that you return your RSVP card

Senior Appreciation Week

This year our seniors will be appreciated and celebrated regionally with Mass, lunch and entertainment at the following dates and locations:

September 19, St. Mary Cathedral, Lansing

September 20, St. Isidore, Laingsburg

September 20, St. Rita, Clarklake

September 21, Sacred Heart, Hudson

September 22, St. John, Hartland

September 23, TBD, Washtenaw




Lent

WELCOME dear feast of Lent
who loves not thee
He loves not temperance
or authority,
But is composed of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast;
the Church says, Now;
Give to thy Mother
what thou wouldst allow
To every corporation...

YET, Lord, instruct us how
to improve our fast
By starving sin, and
taking such repast
As may our faults control
that every man may
revel at his door,
Not in his parlor:
Banqueting the poor,
And among these, his soul.

GEORGE HERBERT, 1593-1633

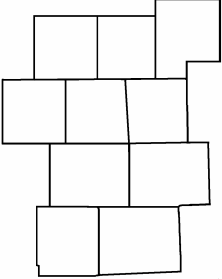




Diocese of Lansing Office of Deacons

300 West Ottawa St.
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Submit newsletter articles to the Office of Deacons
(bsirl@dioceseoflansing.org or awoelf@dioceseoflansing.org)



Pax Christi Michigan

The 24th Annual State Conference of Pax Christi Michigan will be held Saturday, April 9 at the Clarion Hotel in Kalamazoo. Liz McAlister, Plowshares peace activist and co-founder of Jonah House, will give the keynote address. Participants will choose between eight available workshops, including our own Fr. Peter Dougherty. Registration information is available from Fr. Fred Thelen, Cristo Rey Parish in Lansing or the Office of Deacons. Or visit their website: www.paxchristimi.org or call 517-482-2558 for more information

PRAY FOR PEACE