

C OMMUNITY C OMMUNICATIONS

Summer 2007



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

Robert C. Chadwick 1928 - 2007

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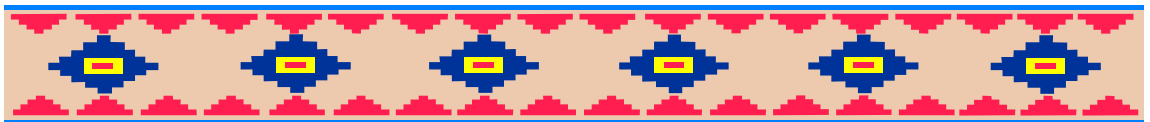
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In Memoriam — Deacon Bob Chadwick

Robert C. Chadwick, age 78, passed away Sunday, June 3, 2007. He was born November 20, 1928 in Ypsilanti, MI, the fourth child of Walter F. and Ruth E. (Moore) Chadwick. After high school graduation, he served two years in the United States Navy. On October 4, 1958, he married Louise M. Bishop and she preceded him in death March 18, 1973. He received his BA degree in 1956 from Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and his MA in education from Eastern Michigan University in 1964. He taught at Our Lady of Sorrows High School in Farmington, St. John High School in Ypsilanti, Glen Lake Community Schools, Bishop Foley High School in Madison Heights and Bishop Borgess High School in Redford. He retired in 1990. In 1992, he was accepted into the Church Ministries Institute, Diocese of Lansing, for studies and formation leading to the Permanent Diaconate. He was ordained in August 1995 and assigned to serve the Bishop at St. John the Baptist Parish, Ypsilanti. He is survived by his five children, Kathleen Carr of Ypsilanti, Matthew (Cathleen) of Garden City, Mark (Cheryl) of Simi Valley, CA, Anne of Whitmore Lake and Michael of Novi; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and a host of nieces and nephews. In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by three brothers and two sisters. The funeral Mass will be 7 PM Wednesday, June 5, 2007 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 410 W. Cross Street, Ypsilanti with Monsignor Robert Lunsford and Re. Fr. Edmond Ertzbischoff as concelebrants. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to St. John Parish “Moving Forward in Faith” campaign. Envelopes are available at the church where visitation will be 4-8 PM Tuesday and 4 PM until the 7 PM Mass Wednesday. The vigil service will be held at 7 PM Tuesday at the church. Private burial will take place in St. John Cemetery. Arrangements by Stark Funeral Service Moore Memorial Chapel. Please sign his guest book at www.starkfuneral.com.



I heard of Bob Chadwick years before I met him at a deacon cluster meeting.

Jan, a hospice patient whom I had the honor to serve during her last two years, enjoyed telling me stories about her life prior to her husband’s death. Many of her reminiscences involved their double dates with some special friends, the Chadwicks. Jan always concluded her stories of those good times with an account of how kind and caring this Bob Chadwick, now Deacon Chadwick, was. “It’s no surprise they made him a deacon. He’s good all the way through. You just don’t find many people like Bob.

-Barbara Papp

Reflections on Bob Chadwick's Life

By Paul Ellis

It's difficult to know where to begin in reflecting on the Bob Chadwick I knew, so I guess I'll begin at the beginning.

Bob and I met when we began our formation as candidates for the diaconate about fifteen years ago. It never ceases to amaze me how God introduces influential people into our lives whom we would never have met on our own. That was the case with Bob and me. On the surface, we had nothing in common. We were at least a generation apart in age, had completely different backgrounds...he in parochial education and administration and me in automotive business administration. I had a very busy and involved family life while Bob was a long term widower with grown children. And we were light years apart in our Catholicity as Bob was a "cradle" Catholic who had spent time in the seminary discerning a call to the priesthood while I was a convert still seeking to develop a fundamental understanding of my faith.

One thing we did have in common, however, was that we lived in southeastern Washtenaw County and our formation classes would all take place in Lansing. It was a logical decision that we should car pool together on our Saturday treks to Lansing. It didn't take us long, spending three plus hours together in a car each week, to find topics we could discuss with ease.

I learned that Bob had lost his beloved wife, Louise, to cancer when she was in her early thirties, leaving him to raise five young children. It was difficult for him, but Bob taught his children to be as self sufficient as possible. But he wouldn't take any special credit for his accomplishment, saying he just did what he had to do.

That was just one of Bob's remarkable traits, he was as humble a person as I have known. He had much to be proud of, but he would rather deflect the attention away from himself while giving credit or praise to others. And he was genuinely interested in other people. Every time I saw Bob or talked to him, he would ask about Mary, my wife, and I knew he wasn't just being polite. He really cared.

Bob's career was in education and he had a great deal of knowledge to share with others. Watching him in a classroom setting, (he coordinated the RCIA program for his parish and periodically invited me to be a guest speaker), the teacher in him was very evident. He was knowledgeable, interesting and had a delightful sense of humor, all the while effectively conveying whatever point he was making. You can always tell a good teacher by the way their students relate to them, and in Bob's case you could see both affection and respect in their eyes. The irony was that he considered himself an introvert. But those who knew him well knew better!

Among the most remarkable things about Bob was that he never complained about anything or anyone. Even during his final months when he was in constant pain, he remarked that it wasn't so bad, saying "I'm on the lowest dose of morphine they can give me". When they put him on a liquid diet, his comment was that he was learning how to puree all sorts of new things to spice up his diet. Regarding other people, Bob practiced the motto, "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all". In all the years I knew Bob, I cannot recall him ever making a disparaging remark about another person.

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BONUSES

by Pat Sirl

This past year was a bonus year for the Lansing diaconate community, for the Chadwick family and for all of us who knew, loved and respected Deacon Bob Chadwick.

I met Bob seven years ago, when he and Wayne Charlton attended a national diaconate conference in Oakland, California. Bill and I were attending our first national conference. We were brand new to the diaconate and the office of deacons and were feeling just a little overwhelmed. Bob and I hit it off as only two educators can and thus began our very special friendship.

He was always a morale booster for me. Encouraging, helpful and a great sounding board. Over the years, he would send me messages through Bill and our infrequent meetings were always special.

Apparent to any who knew him were his deep and abiding faith, his devotion to and his joy in his ministry, his love and concern for his children and all those who held a special place in his heart.

Ever since his surgery for lung cancer and subsequent struggles with it, we've had numerous conversations. Usually, Bill and I left feeling ministered to instead of having ministered to him.

Each and every time we saw him over the past year, it was a bonus. One more time to laugh, to let him know he was in our prayers, to share our faith - to be friends. The last time we saw him was at the deacon ordination, May 19. Bob came downstairs and talked with the Candidates and their wives just before the ceremony and gave them his blessing; another bonus for all of us.

Bob was so joyous about the prospect of meeting his Lord and Savior that it makes it hard to grieve for him. Rather he wanted us to share in his joy! Ever the teacher.

As a last bonus for us, it's nice to know we have Bob, Currie, Judy, Santos and Terry together as our little band of new diaconate angels.

Wise Counsel from Our Holy Father

Continued from Page 5

And then, preaching. What do we preach? We proclaim the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom of God is not a distant utopia in a better world which may be achieved in 50 years' time, or who knows when. The Kingdom of God is God himself, God close to us who became very close in Christ. This is the Kingdom of God: God himself is near to us and we must draw close to this God who is close for he was made man, remains man and is always with us in his Word, in the most Holy Eucharist and in all believers. Therefore, proclaiming the Kingdom of God means speaking of God today, making present God's words, the Gospel which is God's presence and, of course, making present the God who made himself present in the Holy Eucharist.

By interweaving these three priorities and, naturally, taking into account all the human aspects, including our own limitations that we must recognize, we can properly fulfil our priesthood. This humility that recognizes the limitations of our own strength is important as well. All that we cannot do, the Lord must do. And there is also the ability to delegate and to collaborate. All this must always go with the fundamental imperatives of praying, tending and preaching.

Wise Counsel from Our Holy Father

published by Zenit News Service

On July 24, while on vacation, Pope Benedict XVI met with a group of priests from two Italian dioceses in a question and answer session. Much of the following response applies as well to deacons.

Fr. Mauro: Your Holiness, in exercising our pastoral ministry we are increasingly burdened by many duties. Our tasks in the management and administration of parishes, pastoral organization and assistance to people in difficulty are piling up. I ask you, what are the priorities we should aim for in our ministry as priests and parish priests to avoid fragmentation on the one hand and on the other, dispersion? Thank you.

Benedict XVI: That is a very realistic question is it not? I am also somewhat familiar with this problem, with all the daily procedures, with all the necessary audiences, with all that there is to do. Yet, it is necessary to determine the right priorities and not forget the essential: the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

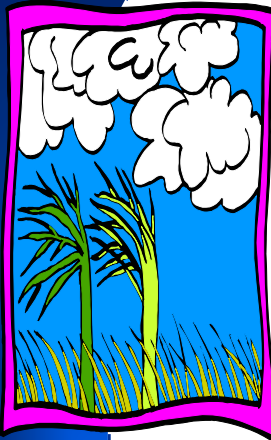
On hearing your question, I remembered the Gospel of two weeks ago on the mission of the 70 disciples. For this first important mission which Jesus had them undertake, the Lord gave them three orders which on the whole I think express the great priorities in the work of a disciple of Christ, a priest, in our day too. The three imperatives are: to pray, to provide care, to preach. I think we should find the balance between these three basic imperatives and keep them ever present as the heart of our work. Prayer: which is to say, without a personal relationship with God nothing else can function, for we cannot truly bring God, the divine reality or true human life to people unless we ourselves live them in a deep, true relationship of friendship with God in Jesus Christ. Hence, the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a fundamental encounter where the Lord speaks to me and I speak to the Lord who gives himself through my hands.

Without prayer of the Hours, in which we join in the great renewed faith of the Church, and without personal prayer, we cannot be good priests for we would lose the essence of our ministry. The first imperative is to be a man of God, in the sense of a man in friendship with Christ and his Saints.

Then Comes the second command. Jesus said: tend the sick, seek those who have strayed, those who are in need. This is the Church's love for the marginalized and the suffering. Rich people can also be inwardly marginalized and suffering. "To take care of" refers to all human needs, which are always profoundly oriented to God. Thus, as has been said, it is necessary for us to know our sheep, to be on good terms with the people entrusted to us, to have human contact and not lose our humanity, because God was made man and consequently strengthened all dimensions of our being as humans.

However, as I said, the human and the divine always go hand in hand. To my mind, the sacramental ministry is also part of this "tending" in its multiple forms. The ministry of Reconciliation is an act of extraordinary caring which the person needs in order to be perfectly healthy. Thus, this sacramental care begins with Baptism, which is the fundamental renewal of our life, and extends to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick. Of course, all the other sacraments and also the Eucharist involve great care for souls. We have to care for people but above all – this is our mandate - for their souls. We must think of the many illnesses and moral and spiritual needs that exist today and that we must face, guiding people to the encounter with Christ in the sacrament, helping them to discover prayer and meditation, being silently recollected in church with this presence of God.

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Kindness

from Fr. Charlie Irving

Fr. Charlie Irving offered the following as a Monday Morning Reflection recently. It brought to mind Bob Chadwick.

Fifty years ago I made a retreat at Our Lady of Gethsemani monastery in Kentucky. Thomas Merton was there. While there on retreat, I picked up a holy card that had the following printed on it.

Of all the apostolates open to all of us the most effective, the most far-reaching the most consoling is kindness.

Kindness is one of God's best gifts to the world.

It drives gloom and darkness from souls.

It puts hope into fainting hearts.

It sweetens sorrow.

It lessens pain.

It discovers unsuspected beauties of human character.

It calls forth a response from all that is best in souls

It purifies, glorifies, ennobles all that it touches.

It opens the floodgates of children's laughter.

It gathers the tears of repentant love.

It lightens the burdens of weariness.

It stops the torrent of angry passion.

It takes the sting from failure.

It kindles courageous ambition.

It lifts the unfortunate.

It leads back the wayward.

It walks in the steps of Our Savior.

Let us become apostles of kindness to partake of its sweetness, to aspire to its holiness.

The apostolate of kindness is exalted; it is sublime; it is Christlike.

Sabbath Time Retreat

At only \$50 for two nights and two days, including meals, these retreats at the St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, are one of the best bargains around. The Sabbath Time Retreat offers pastoral leaders an environment of prayer, worship rest, spiritual companionship and support for their pursuit of excellent pastoral ministry. There are structured times for Scripture Readings, collegial discussions and group prayer as well as plenty of time for private meditation and reflection. Future dates this year include October 16-18, and November 27-29. Open to ministers of all faiths, these retreats fill up fast so call the Retreat Center now at 866-669-8321 to reserve your time. The Sabbath Time Retreat was recently featured in a front page article in The Lansing State Journal.

For the sick:

- Mike Barrett
- Bill Everett
- Betty Garber
- Lisa Kenney
- Joe Kratofil
- Margaret Krieger
- Tony Mammina
- Bishop Carl Mengeling
- Penny Novak
- Tony Papp - Papp's son
- Jesse Pizana - Pizana's grandson
- John Sundwick
- Tony Verdun
- Lynn Williams - Papp's daughter



Community Prayer Line



Genesee/Owosso Cluster

Place: TBD
Date: TBD
Time:
Contact: G. Gallagher, J. Daunt
Other Details:

Jackson/Lenawee/Hillsdale Cluster

Place: TBD
Date: TBD
Time:
Contact: Carol or Linda Franssen
Other Details:

Lansing Cluster

Place: St. Mary — Charlotte
Date: Sept 21
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Contact: T Heutsche, T. Fogle
Other Details:

Livingston Cluster

Place: Holy Spirit — Hamburg
Date: Sept 29
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Dave. Piggot, J. Chevalier
Other Details:

Washtenaw Cluster

Place: TBD
Date: TBD
Time:
Contact: W. Hecht or T. Franklin
Other Details:

Cluster Meetings

For those who have died:

- Bob Chadwick
- Judy Landers - Bill Fudge's sister
- Rev. William Thomas

Necrology

June

- 10 Dcn (John) Patrick Garber 2003
- 18 Dcn Richard Soucy 2003
- 19 Helen Buess 1992
- 28 Mr. James Hacker 1989

July

- 14 Dcn Edward Fournier 1989

August

- 1 Kathleen Weitzel 1987
- 2 Robert Paul Vatter 2004



For the safety and well being of our men and women in uniform, especially:

Spc. Daniel Flanagan
Flanagan's son
Maj. Christopher Fogle
1st Lt. Mark Fogle
TSgt. Angelia Fogle
SSgt. Glenn Fogle
Fogle's sons,
daughter-in-law & nephew
Spc. Patrick Franklin
Franklin's son
John Patrick Hilker
Hilker's son
Maj. Timothy McDonald
Spc. Michael McDonald
McDonald's sons
Capt. Donald Michael
First year Candidate
MSgt. Bill Shively
Cahaney's son-in-law



Thank You from Chadwick Family

Dear Deacons and Families,

So many of you called and visited Dad and made arrangements to have his vestments found, cleaned and delivered. We understand there was a bit of “divine intervention,” or many little miracles, that happened in Dad’s final weeks. We would like to thank you for all your support and love for Dad/Deacon Bob and for us. It meant so much to us to see all of you at his service. Thank you for the beautiful floral arrangement.

The Chadwick Family

Reflections on Bob Chadwick's Life

Continued from Page 3

and would begin working on his homilies at least a month in advance. And he was never satisfied that they were as good as they could be (although he was an excellent homilist). He began planning for his funeral long before he became ill, telling me the kind of casket he wanted (made by the Trappists in Getheminie, where he enjoyed going on retreat) and that he would be dressed in his ordination vestments. Saying Bob was prepared would be a gross understatement!

I seriously question whether I could have made it through formation without Bob as my companion. He helped me to understand things I wasn't able to otherwise grasp, he gave me encouragement when it was needed and listened to my complaints with a sympathetic ear. We learned that we really had much in the way of common interests and found a great deal to talk about in our travels.

There are many words that could be used to describe Bob Chadwick, all of them complimentary. But the word that best describes my relationship with Bob is that he was my friend. Our time together was relatively short, but the impact he made on my life was, and will continue to be, substantial. He is my role model as a husband, father, deacon and human being. We began as car poolers, and I will deeply miss the physical presence of Bob in my life. But I think he would be pleased to know that the lessons I learned from his words and example will remain as a constant companion to me for the rest of my life.



Dave and his brother seminarians prepare for a trolley tour.

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TO BLESSED JOHN XXIII NATIONAL SEMINARY

By Deacon David Rosenberg
“Ora et Labora”

As you may have heard through Bill Sirl’s recent email, I have been accepted as a seminarian by our diocese. I will be attending Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts starting August 25th.

When I was ordained a deacon in May of 2005 I had no idea of the changes that were in store for me over the next two years – and certainly not a calling to the priesthood. I had been steadily drawn toward pastoral ministry, and following my ordination I found that I was even more immersed into it. From talking to other deacons over the years, this seems to be what we all go through. In my case I was free of the obligations of a spouse, which meant I had more time to dedicate to the community.

Then last December I went through a crossroad with my career. It was then that my prayers for discernment changed. I needed clarification on what I felt might be a priestly calling. There were many obstacles, too many as far as I was concerned. My prayers included the need to have those obstacles removed if I was

indeed being called, or I would set aside the thought once and for all. At first, I couldn't imagine the seminary as a possibility. But over the next few months of early 2007, the impossible became the possible, and slowly, nearly without my awareness, the plan unfolded.

Ash Wednesday fell on February 21st this year. I played the music for the 8:15 Morning Mass, and was scheduled to preside at the 12 Noon Service. In preparing for my homily, I was moved by the powerful concept of us as "Ambassadors for Christ." Even though this is the common reading, it meant much more to me this year than in years past. Then at Mass, Fr. Brendan's homily spoke directly to me, as it intersected with my message. Following the 12 Noon Service, I found the time to sit in the empty church and meditate. In that sacred moment, I heard Jesus gently telling me, "David, the path has been cleared for you. There are no obstacles you will not overcome." I was stunned, yet I was able to walk away with a blind faith inspired by the Holy Spirit -- a faith that firmly set my resolve.

Over the next month, I met with my spiritual director, Fr. Charlie Irvin. He thought this was indeed a calling I should act on. I next spoke with Fr. Brendan, asking for his support. He gave it without reservation. Then I scheduled a meeting with Fr. Jerry Vincke in the Office of Seminarians. He and Jane Sessions were both affirming in their gracious responses.

I will always remember the day Fr. Jerry and I walked across the hall to Bill Sirl's office to talk with him. What a surprised yet joyful reception I received from both him and Arlene Woelfel.

In early May, upon the completion of my application, interview with our bishop, and formation board review process, I received my Letter of Acceptance from Bishop Mengeling. Just this Spring Term I also completed my Bachelor of Theology Degree from Siena Heights. And, with Fr. Jerry's (and Jane Session's) help I completed the application process for Blessed John. I visited and was interviewed by their Admissions Board, and was accepted on July 20th. Making straight the path to Our Lord is never easy. But I can say without reservation that it is sure.

Please keep me and all our seminarians in your prayers. In turn, I will always be your ambassador and strong advocate for the Permanent Diaconate. I promise to fan the flame of desire by our Church for Permanent Deacons and their wives, and to keep the fire ever burning brightly.

NOTE: Dave Rosenberg can be reached at: drosenberg@faithmembers.com

Other Important Dates

“Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust”

Immaculee Ilibagiza is a survivor of the Rwandan wave of genocide. In her book of the above title, she writes of her harrowing experiences as she was hidden for 91 days in a four foot by six foot bathroom with five other women while former friends, neighbors and soldiers hunted her. Her story of fear for the atrocities taking place and her trust in God is both horrifying and inspiring. She has appeared on national network talk shows to tell her story. Now we have an opportunity to hear her in person as the Department of Formation has arranged for Immaculee to come to our diocese. She will be at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Ann Arbor the evening of October 4. The following day she will be at St. Thomas Aquinas in East Lansing. This is a don't miss opportunity. You will definitely want to hear her witness to the power of prayer and trust in God.

Riding the Dragon

Dr. Robert Wicks, noted author and international speaker, will be at the St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, **September 21, 2007**. He will present a day long conference on the prevention of secondary stress (the pressure that results from reaching out to others in need) and the integration of psychology and spirituality. Cost for the day, including lunch, is only \$50. Call the Retreat Center at 866-669-8321 to register.

Avery Cardinal Dulles Coming This Fall

Cardinal Dulles will be the featured speaker for the Catechetical days this Fall. Any one who has studied the Models of Church would be familiar with him. Michael Andrews has arranged for the Cardinal to be the keynote speaker at Catechetical Day in Lansing at Lansing Catholic Central on **Saturday, October 22** and at Gabriel Richard in Ann Arbor on **Sunday, October 23**. Be sure to mark your calendar for one of those dates to meet and hear one of the foremost American theologians of the 20th century.

Directory Updates

Rod Amon

work phone: 810-742-3151

Dave Borzenski

work phone: 517-636-5001

Pat McDonald

eMail: pmcd101@sbcglobal.net

Work: 810-220-3444

Endre & Theresa Doran

email: 3847ejd@att.net

Michael Sullivan

email: msullivan@spiritualcare.us

Jack & Pat Kowalski

email: jkowalski@queenschurch.com

Jerry O'Toole

Delete Michigan address, etc

email: dcnjer@hotmail.com

Joe & Mary Lou Kratofil

email: jakmlk8@aol.com

Updated Deacon Community Directory Coming

Arlene will be working on updating the Deacon Community Directory to be published this Fall. You can help by checking your listing and letting Arlene know of any changes at 517-342-2510 or awoelfel@dioceseoflansing.org. In particular, check your email address and work number. Also, let us know if you have a cell phone and would like the number in the directory.

Benedict XVI Notes Three Issues That Need Study

from Zenit News Service

Benedict XVI says the crisis of modernity arises from an attempt to separate the human person from his “full truth,” which includes his “transcendent vocation.”

The Pope said this Saturday, June 23, when he received in audience in Paul VI Hall the participants in the European Meeting of University Professors. Their four day meeting was dedicated to the theme, “A New Humanism for Europe. The Role of the Universities.”

The Holy Father invited the participants to consider three concrete themes of reflection, which he called “foundational issues.”

He first encouraged “a comprehensive study of the crisis of modernity.”

He said this crisis “has less to do with modernity’s insistence on the centrality of man and his concerns, than with the problems raised by a ‘humanism’ that claims to build a ‘regnum hominis’ detached from its necessary ontological foundation.”

The Pontiff continued: “A false dichotomy between theism and authentic humanism, taken to the extreme of positing an irreconcilable conflict between divine law and human freedom, has led to a situation in which humanity, for all its economic and technical advances, feels deeply threatened.”

“As my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, stated, we need to ask “whether in the context of all this progress, man, as man, is becoming truly better, that is to say, more mature spiritually, more aware of the dignity of his humanity, more responsible and more open to others.”

Benedict XVI encouraged consideration of the entirety of the human person: “The anthropocentrism which characterizes modernity can never be detached from an acknowledgment of the full truth about man, which includes his transcendent vocation.”

The Pope also called for a “broadening of our understanding of rationality.”

He said that responding to the challenges of contemporary culture means taking a critical approach toward “narrow and ultimately irrational attempts to limit the scope of reason.”

The Holy Father confirmed: “The concept of reason needs instead to be ‘broadened’ in order to be able to explore and embrace those aspects of reality which go beyond the purely empirical.

This will allow for a more fruitful, complementary approach to the relationship between faith and reason.”

Benedict XVI further encouraged investigation on the “contribution which Christianity can make to the humanism of the future.”

He said: “The question of man, and thus of modernity, challenges the Church to devise effective ways of proclaiming to contemporary culture the ‘realism’ of her faith in the saving work of Christ. Christianity must not be relegated to the world of myth and emotion, but respected for its claim to shed light on the truth about man, to be able to transform men and women spiritually, and thus to enable them to carry out their vocation in history.”

The Pope referred to a speech he made in his recent apostolic journey to Brazil. “I voiced my conviction that ‘unless we do know God in and with Christ, all of reality becomes an indecipherable enigma.”

He added: “Knowledge can never be limited to the purely intellectual realm; it also includes a renewed ability to look at things in a way free of prejudices and preconceptions, and allow ourselves to be ‘amazed’ by reality, whose truth can be discovered by uniting understanding with love.

“Only the God who has a human face, revealed in Jesus Christ, can prevent us from truncating reality at the very moment when it demands ever new and more complex levels of understanding. The Church is conscious of her responsibility to offer this contribution to contemporary culture.”

THE TOLL OF TIME

By: Mary Robertson

As I'm approaching the "far side of middle age" (65 in August), Jesus' admonition in Matthew that "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" takes on new meaning. As I now type this essay on "WORD," I'm struggling to focus on the monitor screen with my brand-new trifocal glasses. With the unusually cold, damp, rainy first week of June we are experiencing, I'm popping more Celebrex and aspirin than usual for an arthritis flare-up. But of course I'm not alone as I deal with the effects of aging. I recall reading a few years ago that the median age of the U.S. Catholic deacon is 62. It occurs to me that diaconal configuration with Christ makes us mystically one with the Isaian Suffering Servant whom we are ordained to serve. This is---or ought to be---more so the case as we suffer the inevitable effects of aging. My favorite quotable quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is this: "Unearned suffering is redemptive."

The Lansing State Journal online (www.lsj.com) has an interesting interactive website entitled "The Toll of Time." Some of that website's statistics on the effects of aging are sobering. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of impaired vision for those over 60; About half of those aged 80 have cataracts or have had cataract surgery. 33% of those between 65-75 have hearing loss. The top killer of those over 65 is heart disease. Many seniors suffer from chronic digestive problems. After age 40, people average a height loss of 0.4 inches per decade, even discounting hair loss. After age 65, replacements parts for the body (artery stents, pacemakers, hip and knee joints, etc.) are commonly needed.

So are we "old-timers" to cope with the inevitable by stoically gritting our teeth with a stiff upper lip? Do we try to ignore it---or "grin and bear it?" A wise sister in our own deacon community counseled that we should listen to God speaking to us through our bodies. I think that's good practical spiritual advice. Some cynics have observed that during our "golden years," it's the medical professionals and pharmacies that get the gold. It's tempting to fall into the trap of negativity as we suffer diminished and diminishing capacity. Perhaps God speaks to the aging body and says, "Good and faithful servant, it's time for you to start spending more time in the 4 R's---rest, recreate, relax, reflect." Years ago, a wise mentor told me before he retired, "Don't take on a new project unless you get rid of an old one." Ministry "burnout" can be the sad consequence of not letting go and cutting back. The proverb, "Let go and let God" has special relevance for those of us entering the sunset years.

Some cynical philosopher once pronounced that "all life is a movement toward death." That may be true in the natural order, but our Profession of Faith at the Eucharistic Celebration reminds us of the supernatural order, of the life of the world to come. In our materialistic culture, the world is sadly in need of the faithful witness of those who age gracefully and spiritually. Deacons are called to be such witnesses.

The Minister and the Bus Driver

It seems a minister and a tour bus driver arrived at heaven's pearly gates at exactly the same time. God set the minister aside and began to welcome the bus driver.

This puzzled the minister so he said to God, "Lord, I preached your Gospel hundreds of times to thousands of people. I worked hard to bring them closer to you. Why would you take this bus driver first?"

God replied, "Yes, that's true. But when you were preaching, many people drifted off to think of other things and some even fell asleep. Now when this driver was barreling through those dangerous mountain curves and past steep drop offs, everybody was praying."

For Your Marriage

From Deacon Tom Fogle

Foryourmarriage.org – an easy way to promote marriage in your parishes.

Over the upcoming weeks and months, we encourage you to continuously place the announcements listed below in your parish bulletin.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has just announced this major effort to promote marriage in our society and churches. Without your help we cannot get the word out to your parishioners. Please make this a priority item for your bulletin.

I also encourage you to take a look at the website yourself. Much effort has gone into making this a very user friendly website for all engaged and married couples. There are many wonderful tips that we can use in our homilies, pastoral care, and talks we often are called on to give. Please promote the cause. It's a great resource, but each of us needs to promote this effort.

What have you done for your marriage today? Celebrate the Good News of Married Love. Check out our U.S. Bishops new website encouraging married couples on their lifetime journey. Go to <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/>. Then forward the website to your friends and family.

What have you done for your marriage today? Are you looking for ways to enhance your relationship? Then go directly to www.foryourmarriage.org/. It's part of our U.S. Bishops efforts to promote marriage. Help us help you family and friends. Email the website address to family and friends.

What have you done for your marriage today?

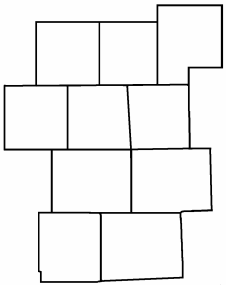
You want your marriage to grow. So do we. Because the Catholic Church cares for your marriage we encourage you to go to our new U.S. Bishops website www.foryourmarriage.org/. Take time to nurture your marriage. After all, it's a lifetime adventure. Spread the word. Send the website address on to family and friends.



Diocese of Lansing Office of Deacons

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

300 West Ottawa St.
Lansing, Michigan 48933



DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL DAY 2007

The deadline for registering for this year's Diocesan Catechetical Day is the end of September. More than 700 participants from throughout the diocese are expected to gather Saturday, October 20 at Lansing Catholic Central High School, Lansing, or Sunday at Fr. Gabriel Richard High School, Ann Arbor for Diocesan Catechetical Day 2007. Doors will open at 8:00 a.m.

This year's theme is *Catechesis: Encountering the Living Christ*.

The day begins at 8:45 a.m. with an opening prayer service and keynote presentation by Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., famed theologian and author of *Models of the Church*.

There will be more than 50 skill-building workshops on topics such as creative teaching methods for various age levels, RCIA, adult faith formation, innovative ideas for teen programs and many others. Fifteen catechist formation topics will be included among the workshops. Participants can choose modules on spirituality, the Church's social teaching, evangelization, liturgy, and on-line learning. The keynote presentation on Sunday will be simultaneously translated into Spanish and four modules will be presented in Spanish.

Fifteen exhibitors and two Catholic bookstores will also be present with resource books, religious education textbook series and other resources for adults, teens, and children. Come early and browse through this wonderful display. The final round of workshops will conclude at 4:00 p.m. Mass will be celebrated at each site at 4:15 p.m.

For a complete brochure and registration material go to www.dioceseoflansing.org to download as many copies of the brochure and registration materials as you wish.

Pray for Peace

