

# Deacon Talk

COUNCIL of DEACONS NEWSLETTER | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



**DIACONATE  
FORMATION**  
*Where love becomes service.*

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## DIRECTOR'S REPORT



*Dcn. Mike  
Chmielewski*

After our recent Deacon Personnel Board meeting, Dcn. Rich Gulig and I were in the halls of the Cousins Center talking when Bishop Sklba approached us, requesting a parish assignment because he was after all an ordained deacon. When we inquired about the scope of the assignment, considering he was “getting older”; he quickly told us that “getting older” was a process that he had fully completed and thus he had achieved being “old.”

I have reflected on our brief exchange with Bishop Sklba and have 2 takeaways to share with you. First, a continued appreciation for the gift that Bishop Sklba has been and continues to be for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and our Deacon family. Bishop Sklba has always been a strong supporter of our presence and ministry. He has regularly

led prayer and reflection with the Deacon Formation program as well as the family of the Permanent Diaconate. He most recently was the presider at our Memorial Mass 2017. He was also the ordaining Bishop for my class (2009).

My second takeaway from that day is “old.” It is amazing all that Bishop Sklba does for the Church after achieving “old.” Also amazing is all that our deacons and wives do after they have achieved “old.” In my role with the deacon family, I am awed every week by what our deacons, and in particular those who have achieved “old”, do for God’s people.

There are brothers and sisters whose bodies are wearing out. Eyes, ears, knees, hips, shoulders, even minds have severely limited ministry. Some are no longer able to drive and some are now the primary caretaker for a needy spouse. However, ministry continues to

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## DEACON SENATE

The Deacon Senate met on November 15, 2017 at the Cousins Center. Deacons present: Nees, Wiese, Bowen, Campbell, C. Schneider, Maack, Copson, Paczkowski, Kilkenny, Chmielewski. Excused: Ebel, Jansen. Opening prayer led by Dcn. Maack.

We had 3 guests from Arch offices that led off the meeting.

First, Michelle Nemer, from the Synod Office, gave an update on the plans for a “Service Saturday” for the 175th anniversary celebration. She attended our previous meeting in September and laid out a possible plan for deacons to spearhead a “Service Saturday” in the Fall of 2018 or Spring Of 2019.

The invitation was met with more questions and concerns

at the District level than with any enthusiasm. The 175th Anniversary planning committee at the Arch will continue to plan the event and keep the deacon community connected.

Randy Nohl (Synod) and Susan McNeil (Lay Ministry) with a focus group activity for

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be a significant priority in their life.

There was a deacon on his death bed lamenting his inability to minister in his last weeks of life on this earth. There is the 97 year old deacon who confesses he is "slowing down" as we plan a meeting to review his covenant. There is a deacon who is working hard to renew his ministry contacts after a near death infection last year. The stories never end and never cease to astonish this deacon.

Prayers and blessings to all in our deacon family. To those who are in the process of aging and those who have achieved "old"; thank you for all you do for God's people. Our call as disciple and as deacon will not achieve fulfillment until we enter God's eternal kingdom.

*Dcn. Mike Chmielewski*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



*Dcn. Dale Nees*

Greetings Brother Deacons and Wives,

For the first time since 1945, Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday fall on the same day this year.

Ash Wednesday celebrates the great sacrificial love which goes to the heart of our very being. As Catholics we embrace that love, and wholeheartedly live this one day of penance and abstinence which marks the beginning of the powerful season of Lent.

The penitential practices of Lent, as are all acts of penance in a Christian context, aimed at learning to love, learning to live unselfishly. They help us to hone our ability to give, share, let go and let be – all vital aspects of loving.

From the family perspective, what is being celebrated on the feast of St. Valentine includes the sacrificial love of a couple. So

many of Valentine card messages are about "giving my all for you" witnessing to a commitment that goes beyond romantic love and is more like agape love which ties in so beautifully with the unconditional sacrificial love that we celebrate on Ash Wednesday.

Human love is God's plan from the beginning.

So instead of buying chocolates or flowers we are invited to give a gift of time to our loved one – a walk, a remembrance of how we met, a technology-free evening together, joint prayer time, tender hugs and more. The idea is inspired by "The Joy of Love", where Pope Francis emphasizes the fundamental importance of time together and personal communication as foundations for a love that lasts. So have a simple but delicious Lenten meal, and talk about love and what it means.

The immense sacrificial love of God at heart of Ash Wednesday is celebrated on a

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**DEACON DAY 2018:** April 14, 2018, *St James, Menomonee Falls* 8 AM until end of lunch.  
Presenter, Dcn. Bill Hampton, Catholic Relief Services

**DEACON APPRECIATION / RETIREMENT GALA FOR JOHN EBEL:** June 30, 2018, 4 PM, *Cousins Center*

**ORDINATION, CLASS OF 2018:** September 8, 2018, *Cathedral*

**ROMAN / EPISCOPAL GATHERING:** May 12, 2018, 8:30-Noon, *St. Bartholomew Episcopal Parish, Pewaukee*  
Speaker, Dcn. Tom Binder (E) Grief Issues

**MEMORIAL MASS 2018:** October 28, 2018, Bishop Jeff Haines presider, *Lumen Christi Parish, Mequon*, District 6/10/13 planning

**DEACON WIVES RETREAT 2018:** April 26-29, 2018, *Siena Center*

**DEACON RETREAT:** November 1-4, 2018, *Redemptorist Retreat Center*, Director, Bishop Jim Schuerman

**POST ORDINATION FORMATION FOR CLASS OF 2016:** (second session), June 2, 2018, *Cousins Center*

► **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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small-scale in lives turned out to others in human love. The graces of falling in love, being in love, the Sacrament of Marriage and the graces hidden in family life can be brought consciously to mind on Valentine's Day helped by Ash Wednesday.

So let us build on the sentiments of the Valentine's Day love, and talk about how we live out our love... quite unconsciously most of the time, in daily feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for life, seeking out the lost, and going the extra mile, in our relationships. Sometimes it bubbles up and we can see the face of Christ, feel the Gospel in action as we sit and hold the hand of our

dying mom, or listen for hours on the phone to our depressed son, or get up in the night to feed the baby, tend to the sick child, go to work to earn a wage to keep food on the table, put in another load of wash. This is the love of God at work in us....unselfish, and celebrated on Valentine's Day.

In a further happenstance, Easter Sunday is on April Fools' Day. Both connections – quite literally – sum up the paradox of the Gospel itself. Easter puts all the wisdom of the world, with its emphasis on obsession with efficiency, productivity, results, success, thrift and reward to nil. God's generous foolishness, in sharing in his Son's life with us, in shedding his blood for us

and in accepting the consequences of being fully human in the inhuman world we've created teaches us that failure is our friend, not our enemy. If we seek to save our life, we'll lose it; if we give our life generously we'll save it. Or, as the late, great Herbert McCabe OP once said: "If in this life you don't love, you're dead; if you do, they crucify you."

My prayer for all of us is that this special time sandwiched between Valentine's and April Fool's Day will be an incredible blessing and opportunity for spiritual growth in our lives and the lives of those around us.

*With Fraternal Charity,  
Deacon Dale Nees*

► **DEACON SENATE**

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the Senate deacons. They are in process of doing these focus questions with various Arch groups with a long range goal of how the central offices can better assist in furthering the mission of our Church. The exercise was slated to go 30 minutes but went nearly an hour with great input from the deacons.

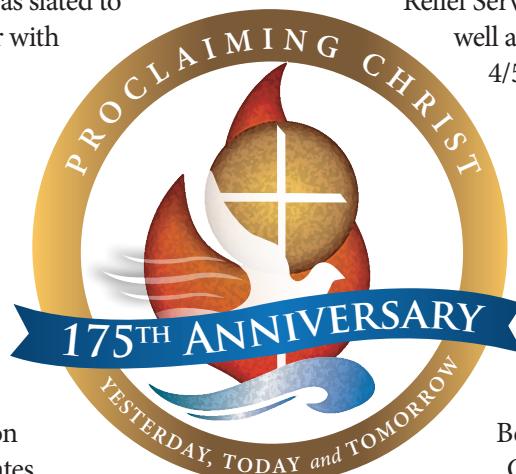
Other meeting highlights: A full financial report was presented by Dcn. Campbell. He is continuing to review previous financial notes to get familiar with financial history. The current balance in the Council account is @ \$16,000.

John Ebel's written report on Formation included notes that there are 8 candidates in the class of 2018 and 8 in the class of 2020. Admissions for the class of 2022 open in January 2018 with 27 men having completed the inquiry sessions. Good numbers!

The reviews from deacons who participated in this year's Deacon Retreat were very favorable. The only issue raised was

the lack of silence at many times during the retreat.

Deacon Day 2018 is set for April 14, 2018 at St. James, Menomonee Falls. Deacon Bill Hampton (Atlanta) of Catholic Relief Services will be the presenter. Plans are moving well as the event is being hosted by Districts 4/5/12.



**ARCHDIOCESE  
of MILWAUKEE**

Reminder to the Senate that the welcome luncheon for the class of 2018 will take place on Saturday 9/1/2018 at 1 PM at the Cathedral Atrium. The Ordination is set for Saturday 9/8/2018 at 10 AM.

Welcome to Dcn. Jeff Copson '09 from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, New Berlin as the new rep for 4/5/12 replacing Scott Campbell who moved into the Treasurer position.

Our next Senate meeting scheduled for 1/17/18 will be cancelled unless a major issue arises. The next time we anticipate gathering as Senate is 3/21/2018, 6 PM at the Cousins Center.

*Dcn. Mike Chmielewski*

## KNOW YOUR DEACON



March 29 is the feast day of St. Cyril, a Palestinian Deacon, martyred about the year 362 under Julian the Apostate. The historian Theodritus relates that during the reign of King St. Constantine the Great, Cyril was responsible for the destruction of many idols and pagan temples. After the death of St. Constantine, Julian the Apostate took over and the pagans sought retribution on the Christians. Many Christians were martyred for their beliefs in the Palestinian cities of Ascalon and Phoenicia. The pagans seized Cyril cut open his stomach and ate his liver. The pagans immediately had their teeth fall out, tongues dried up, and became blind. Cyril is part of the Holy Hieromartyrs of Palestine that also includes St Mark, Bishop, and many other priests and holy people.

## DEACON WIVES RETREAT

“Come by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” (Mark 6:31)  
Come and join us as we answer the holy call in our lives this Easter Season to rest and celebrate our relationship with God. We will focus our retreat on the theme of “Praying with Nature’s Elements: WATER, WIND, EARTH & FIRE.” Creation itself is a sacred text through which the presence of God is revealed to us. Creation / nature is always available for us to “read.” Nature is an essential source of revelation about God. The four elements ... water, wind, earth and fire ... can act as our spiritual director and guide on our journey. The qualities of each of these elements offer an invitation to pray with them so we can know what they reveal about the nature of God and our own spiritual unfolding. You will never look at these elements again in the same way once you have studied, prayed and

experienced them through music, information, symbol, reflection, etc as we will do on this retreat!!! The retreat center on the shores of Lake Michigan provide the perfect setting for our prayer experiences.

SAVE THE DATE

**APRIL  
26-29, 2018**

SIENA CENTER

Deacon wives, watch for the formal invitation to the Wives Retreat coming soon! You will receive an invite via US Postal service. We are also trying to organize the emails of the wives.

If you have an email

separate from your Deacon husband please forward that address to Dcn. Mike Chmielewski (chmielewskim@archmil.org). Otherwise emails will go to the deacon email on file.

The retreat director this year will be Carol Sullivan who has many years of experience as a spiritual director and retreat guide. Please consider spending a few special days with our God and the women of the Diaconate this April.

## CLOWNS AND CATHOLICS

During the first week of January The United States Council of Catholic Bishops held its annual meeting for priests, nuns and deacons who were involved in The Circus and Traveling Show Ministry. Archbishop Listecki is on the board and suggested that I go to Sarasota, Florida to see what it was all about. I always wanted to run away and join the circus, so I jumped at the opportunity to go.

It was a fascinating adventure. I met priests who tour with circuses and others who hang out in the pits at auto races. I met a deacon who ministers to the horse trainers at Arlington Park. The most interesting of all was Sister Dorothy who teaches catechism and does the sacrament preparation for the children of traveling circus families. Her phone contact list is filled with priests from towns

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## ► CLOWNS (continued from page 4)



that the circuses will stop in so that when the children are ready, she can make a call and the sacraments can be given. It was uplifting to know that that The Church was still an important presence even for people who were traveling and didn't have a parish that they could call their own.

The real blessing of the week long meeting though was the chance to mingle with the circus folks themselves. There was the lady whose father was a chimp trainer and told me stories about eating cheerios with diaper wearing primates each morning as she was growing up. One man drove a truck full of elephants from show to show. He told me about an especially smart pachyderm who knew that the fences gave mild electric shocks to keep the elephants away, so he would bump other elephants against the wire just to see if it was still working.

My favorite was a 94 year-old retired clown who always started telling me stories with his favorite greeting, "Hey kid. Let me tell ya something." This 63 year-old deacon appreciated that! Such colorful people, all with a story to share, all living in a world so different from ours, and yet part of ours in a special way. We are all members of the One, Holy, Apostolic, and Universal Church.

Lent and Easter are a time when folks who have fallen away from the Church may return. They, too, have stories that may seem very different from our regular parishioners. It's very easy to create mental lists of why these folks are different and not one of us. Very easy to declare that they don't fit into our

world. That week in Sarasota opened my eyes to how easily we can slip into that. It also showed me that no matter how different the guy sitting next to me in the pew might seem, there is a common place that we can start from to get to know each other. We're all there to praise the Lord!

Let's concentrate on that. Let's make this Lent a time when people who felt that they were outsiders found themselves a home. Make it a Lent where people who wander in feel like we really want them to be part of our faith community. If chimp trainers, elephant handlers, and clowns can make one deacon feel at home, certainly all of the deacons in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee can do the same for anyone who walks through our doors.

*Dcn. Gary Nosacek*

## DEACON PERSONNEL BOARD

The Deacon Personnel Board met on 1/27/2018 at the Cousins Center. In attendance were : Dcns. Gulig, C. Schneider, Nosacek, Campbell, Chmielewski, and Fr. Jerry Herda. Excused: Dcn. Stanula

After Dcn. Nosacek led opening prayer, we did introductions primarily for Fr. Jerry Herda, Vicar of Clergy, who is a member of the Board by way of his office. Fr. Jerry also introduced himself and offered a sincere appreciation for the ministry and service of the permanent diaconate in the Milwaukee Church.

After a review and approval of the minutes of our last meeting (10/7/2017) we launched into an extended discussion of deacon specific issues. Among the issues discussed were: covenant renewals, status changes (retirement or Senior), assignment changes, review of deacons on leave, and those with overdue covenants.

Two points of general interest. One, because of the continuing movement of parish clustering and/ or two or three parishes with a single pastor, deacons who were assigned to one parish now find themselves ministering in 2 or even 3 parishes. Covenant renewals are now reflecting ministry in multiple parishes thus requiring a formal assignment through the Archbishop to those additional parishes.

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The second issue of note is that of the 14 deacons with expired / overdue covenants there are only 4 in which the Director expressed concern. The Director will address these four situations on an individual basis.

The remainder of the meeting included discussion of the following:

- Ordination Class of 2018. A contact list of the next ordination class was given to the Board as a preview and prep for the local Board member's

presence at first covenant signings in August or early September.

- Discussion of the Board's role in potential placement / assignments of deacons. We have a number of parishes with multiple deacons (and more in formation) and still have parishes with no deacons and pastors requesting deacons.
- Open invitation to the second Post Ordination Formation session for the class of 2016 which will happen on 6/2/2018 at the Cousins Center.
- Invitation for a deacon farewell gathering for Dcn. John Ebel scheduled for 6/30/2018 at 4 PM at

the Cousins Center. John retiring in September 2018 after the 2018 ordination.

- Ordination Class of 2018 set for 9/8/2018, 10 AM at the Cathedral.
- We also discussed multiple ministries including the Sheboygan Warming Center, Catholics for Peace and Justice, the Emergency Response Team, and Collars on the Corner.

The meeting closed with prayer with the next meeting scheduled for 5/27/2018 in Fr. Herda's office at the Cousins Center.

*Dcn. Mike Chmielewski*

# Prayer Requests

Deacon Tony Martino '84  
and wife Carole Ann

Deacon Francisco Blas '02  
and wife Florencia

Deacon Roberto Fuentes '02  
and wife Lorenz

Deacon Jay Wittak '05  
and wife Susan

Deacon Dick Govek '92  
and wife Dorothy

Suzanne Weber, widow  
of Dcn. C. Edward '81

Deacon Baleriano Gonzalez '84

Deacon Ron Schneider '96

Deacon Ken Miller '77

Deacon Chuck Schneider '14

Deacon David Sommers '00

Deacon John Burns '88

Mrs. Donna Hying, widow  
of Dcn. Joseph '84

Linda Faust, wife of Dcn. Ted '16

## RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES:

Cindy Schneider 11/28/17,  
wife of Dcn. Chuck '14

JoAnne Burns 12/23/17,  
wife of Dcn. John '88

America Gonzalez 1/7/18,  
wife of the late Dcn. Jose '75

Maureen Haines 1/23/18,  
mother of Bishop Jeff

Virginia Klingseisen 1/29/18,  
mother of Dcn. Paul '09

Deacon C. Edward Weber '81,  
1/31/18

## INDIGENT BURIALS:

Terrence Hassell 12/8/17

Vernon Reickgeld 12/8/17

Rose Flees 12/20/17

Jeffrey Jakubek 12/21/17

Vicki Michel 12/21/17

Troy Ploegman 1/9/18

Ed Dombach 2/1/18



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