

Formation and information for deacons in Australia



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Deacon Anthony Gooley

In the middle of a hot summer, Christmas a fading memory, cricket on the telly and gradually the

country returns to work. Some, like me, have had a long break over the summer but the fog of holidays seems to vanish quickly from the memory within a short while after returning to work.

I hope you and your family had a restful and holy holiday, if you had one and if not then at least I hope the year begins well for all.

In this edition of *AusDeacon News* we have news about our national gathering, to which we hope many of you will be present. Please give it some thought and respond as soon as you are able.

I am very grateful to the many who have contributed to this edition. We have profiles of four deacons from around the country. It is always interesting to read about the backgrounds, family and work histories of deacons. We are a remarkably diverse bunch and I hope that this diversity enriches the churches (dioceses) where we minister and live.

We have three interesting stories from Parramatta diocese, one of which we owe thanks to their diocesan publication *Catholic Outlook*. I am also grateful to Tony Hoban and Brian Myers for their contributions.

The NCD executive encourage you to make this publication your own. There are two broad purposes to this newsletter; information and formation. There must be some news about deacons, your ministry or events which would be worth sharing with other deacons. The need for ongoing formation is critical for all minis-

ters and we strongly encourage deacons to contribute to the ongoing formation of deacons by contributing an article about the ministry of the Word, sacramental/liturgical ministry and pastoral ministry.

We hope that by the end of the year we will have a significant contribution from deacons around the country to all sections of the newsletter. This invitation is extended to Latin Rite deacons, deacons of the Eastern Catholic Churches and deacons in Religious Institutes.

So far I have not had to edit a letter for the purposes of clarity or to conserve space. Why not write to us and tell us, in the nicest possible way, what you think of the newsletter. Give us some feedback about whether or not *AusDeacon News* is meeting the two goals of formation and information. Perhaps you have a comment or question to raise. Letters to the editor are an easy way to do this.

Check out the back page for you to learn ways to contribute.

The number of deacons in Australia continues to grow. Somehow I get the feeling that the whole story of what the Holy Spirit is doing in renewing this ministry at the Second Vatican Council is yet to unfold.

I am not sure that dioceses know yet what a gift the Spirit has given in the ministry of deacons and so the gift languishes in a draw somewhere. How many bishops, priest, deacons and laity have really read and prayerfully pondered on the key church documents, scholarly works and even the Directory, to look at what riches the Spirit provides in this ministry. You are part of the unfolding of the story and we need you to share that story to know where it is the Spirit leads.

Letters to the editor should be sent as a Word attachment to ncdeditor@bigpond.com but please do not make any other attachments.

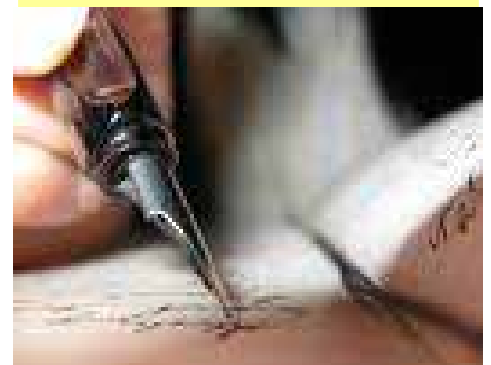
Keep your letter brief and to the point.

AusDeacon News reserves the right to edit for clarity or to conserve space.

Please provide your contact details for verification or checking of content.

Your name and suburb/city will appear at the end of the letter.

Give feedback about the contents of AusDeacon News or express an opinion on some topic.





At funerals, I often make the observation that we gather to celebrate the life of a dear relative or friend in much the same way that we gather on New Year's Eve. As midnight approaches, perhaps with a drink in hand, we reminisce about the year that is drawing to a close - we review our achievements and our disappointments. Like the mourners at the funeral, we have to be realistic of where we are at this particular time. Hopefully the grieving friends and relatives – with our help – will realise that for their loved one, this is only the end of an earthly life, that there is a life in eternity with their God. New Year's Eve is also a time for looking ahead - to the year to come, to learn from the year that has just passed, and to be enthusiastic about the goals we may set for ourselves in the year to come.

By this time, the holiday season for most of us will be only a memory and we will be engrossed in our diaconate ministry to the people whom we serve. When I was young and living on the South Coast of Queensland, (before it became the Gold Coast), one of the local milk companies used the slogan – *“Our milk comes from contented cows.”* It wasn't long before another company, just south of the border replied with a new slogan that declared, *“Our cows are never contented, they always try harder.”*

There are times when we don't feel like taking on new or extra responsibilities in our ministry. There are times when we need to remind ourselves that being ordained to the diaconate was not OUR decision, but that of the Holy Spirit working within us. It was not long after my ordination when this really hit home to me. A teacher in our Primary School asked me to come to talk to her Year Three pupils about my ministry. After talking for a while, I was showing them a couple of my vestments and stoles, when I was interrupted by a young boy with his hand up. “Why did you become a Deacon?” he asked. And the only truthful answer I could give him was, “Because God wanted me to.” With all the formation and organisation for my ordination, it was a direct question that I had not been asked. I'm sure that at some time, all of us have faced the same question in some particular way. I'm also sure that we would all reply in words similar to mine.

These are the moments to remember during the year when our spirits may tend to flag somewhat as we try to manage our commitments to our family and our church. A priest, during a recent discussion on priesthood and diaconate, that priesthood was a lot simpler in that they were only answerable to one vocation. But then we have wonderful supportive wives and family. As someone once said, *“Priests have better quarters – deacons have better halves!”*

The NCD welcomes our new members Roger O'Donnell from Canberra, representing the NSW/ACT region and also Jim Curtain from Beaumaris representing Victoria/Tasmania. We also thank our outgoing member, Elliott Casalengno from Sydney. Elliott has been a very active member of the Committee over several years and I would like to thank him, and his other Sydney deacons for their efforts in getting together the Deacons Vocations display for World Youth Day 08. Elliott, may you and Regina find more time to be together!

In mid-February, the NCD will come together in Geelong for our annual Face to Face meeting which will include a time spent with the National Council of Priests Executive. High on our list of priorities will be continuing the organization of our National Conference in August. More details are to be found elsewhere in this newsletter as well as accommodation details. It will be not only a time for some ongoing formation, but also a chance to spend time together and sharing each other's experiences. More details will emerge and we will keep you informed. Hope that you will be able to come to Sydney for this event.

I would like to thank Anthony Gooley and all who have contributed articles in the 2008 issues, for the work that has gone into our AusDeacon News. Its success will continue in 2009 as more diaconate news is sent for publication. Fresh ideas and discussion from deacons and wives is always welcome.

May your 2009 be filled with happiness, good health and love!

Yours in Christ,

Peter Olsen.

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Prayer Requests

Your prayers are requested for the following who are known to be in need of our prayers;



Bruce Talbot	Perth Archdiocese
Patrick Seatter	Perth Archdiocese
Ernie Carey's wife Peg	Bunbury Diocese
Frank and Lu Feain	Melbourne Archdiocese
Elliott Casalegno's wife Regina,	Sydney Archdiocese
Jim Phelan	Parramatta Diocese
Jim Caulfield	Broken Bay Diocese
Martin Johnson's wife Barbara	Broken Bay

In Memoriam

Please pray for our brother deacons who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.

Vincent DOWDY, Died 12th October 1984, Canberra/Goulburn,

Reg PARDOE, 5th November 1984, Bunbury 1984

Michael FLYNN, 1st April 1997, Bunbury, 1984

Alf LIDDY, 5th March 2000, Darwin, 1994

Monty PRYOR, 13th August 2007, Rockhampton, 1982



Proposed ordination dates (check closer to the time)

Please prayer for our brothers as they prepare for ordination

Greg KERR, 2nd July 2009– Maitland Newcastle

Peter LITTLE, 3rd July 2009– Maitland Newcastle

Nick KERR; -Adelaide



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Greetings to all Australian Deacons and wives,

As you would have read in the last edition of "**AusDeacon News**," the 2009 National Conference will be held at the Caroline Chisholm Centre in the Diocese of Broken Bay from P.M. Thursday 6 August until after lunch Sunday 9 August. It is in its early stages of preparation, but we have set the theme of "*Word, Worship and Service*." At present, speakers are being sought and more details will be given as they come to hand.

Deacons and wives, as well as candidates and aspirants, are invited to gather – to share our experiences, to get to know one another better, and hopefully to have our batteries "recharged."

The Waldorf Hotel is two minutes walk from the conference venue and Mark Powell has been in contact with them. The rate that they quoted is heavily discounted because of the association with the Broken Bay Diocese. Of course, you may have other accommodation available.

This is not intended to be a registration to attend, but simply an **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST** at this stage, to enable further planning and if possible, early bookings for the hotel.

Details that we would like to know at this stage –

I/we do/do not express an interest in attending the 2009 Conference.

Name of Deacon / Mr.

Mrs.....

Archdiocese/Diocese.....

Contact: email address.....

Postal address.....

Please contact one of the above names by 16 February 2009.

Parramatta Deacons Host Annual Gathering



The annual gathering of deacons in Parramatta, Broken Bay and Sydney dioceses was held on the feast of St Francis of Assisi, a brother deacon. The gathering Mass was held in St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta. Bishop Kevin Manning presided at the Mass and Fr Chris De Souza (director of Diaconate-Parramatta) concelebrated. Lunch and fellowship was held afterwards in the Cathedral hall.

This annual gathering started four years ago when the number of deacons across the three dioceses started to grow. The purpose of the gathering is to get to know each other and their wives on a more personal basis. Deacons, wives and aspirants attended the gathering. A number tendered apologies because of previous engagements.

The Cathedral music director, Mr. Bernard Kirkpatrick, provided the musical accompaniment on the organ, and the daughter of Deacon Robert Kim, Miss Leonia Kim, was the cantor. During the Mass prayers were offered for deceased deacons, and Mrs. Judy Huntley (recently deceased) wife of Dave Huntley and for sick deacons and wives.

During his homily, Bishop Kevin said that most parishioners only

see the deacon in this liturgical role and, because the formation of the

parishioners on the role of the deacon has not been extensive, they have gained the impression that the priest can do "everything" and the things the deacon can do are related to liturgy only.

Bishop Kevin said that the permanent diaconate is, in one sense, the face of Christ, and the face of the Church, to those traveling the path to eternal life. In other words, the diaconate faces the world as well as facing the altar. In their professional work, their daily lives as married or single men or widowers, Deacons bring Christ to the world and the world to Christ through their interior conversion to being a servant.

The diaconate is a way of being in the Church, not, and never, a series of tasks to be ticked off as they are accomplished.

Ordination to the diaconate seals the deacon as a servant to the mission of Jesus, which is a mission beyond the altar, beyond the parish, to proclaim the Gospel in the witness of their servant lives in domains where the priest cannot go; in the world of work, of encounter with other families in sporting and leisure activities, in the somewhat explosive world of

teenagers and in the serenity of being grandparents.

Bishop Kevin concluded by saying that perhaps we deacons, could adopt St Francis as the patron of our outgoing conversion of heart so that, like Job, we may die an old man, full of days, and in the deacons' case, full of grace, and a true servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Currently the number of Permanent Deacons in the three dioceses of this region is: Broken Bay-6, Sydney-5 and Parramatta 6 (with 3 students to be brought to Candidacy in December, and 4 others in formation).

Enquiries about the Permanent diaconate in Parramatta can be directed to the Director of Diaconate, Fr Chris deSouza. St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Penrith.

Retreat Weekend in Parramatta

November 14-16 saw the



deacons from Parramatta gather together with aspirants and enquirers for a weekend retreat at the House of Spirituality in Baulkham Hills. Sr Judy McLeod RSM, from Castle Hill parish led the retreat. Sr Judy discussed Baptism, call/vocation, marriage and diaconate. Sr Judy was well versed in these topics as she was married and divorced and had been a Uniting Church Minister before becoming a Catholic and

joining the Parramatta Mercies.

Wives were also encouraged to attend the retreat. A good deal of time was given over to spiritual reflection and prayer, while many of the participants took the time to traverse the labyrinth which has been set up in the grounds of the centre for prayer time and reflection.

It is hoped that this retreat will become an annual event for all the Parramatta deacons.

Three Candidates for Ordination in Parramatta

The Diocese of Parramatta has welcomed three married men as Candidates for Ordination as Permanent Deacons. Bishop Kevin Manning acknowledged the journey of formation that the men and their wives had taken at a special Rite of Candidacy at St Patrick's Cathedral in December.

The couples are Tony and Annette Hoban (Christ the King Parish, North Rocks), Joseph and Trish Ledang (Our Lady of Lourdes at Seven Hills and Holy Trinity at Granville), and Owen and Jeanette Rogers (St Joseph's, Kingswood).

Admission to Candidacy is the final stage before Ordination as Deacons, which is proposed for later this year. Permanent Deacons are distinguished from the Transitional Deacon (a status achieved by single men on the path to Priesthood).

As Ministers of Liturgy, Word and Charity, Deacons proclaim the Gospel and preach, assist at the altar and minister at Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals. However, beyond the doors of the Church, they can take on many ministries and

activities as diverse as hospital and prison chaplaincy, advocating on behalf of the rights of the poor and

disadvantaged, and even assuming public office. As such, being a Deacon in Parramatta Diocese is seen as not a ministry but as a 24 hour of the day vocation that involves every element of life, whether in paid work, in Church, with family and friends, or with those in need.

Therefore, Deacons bring their full life experiences into their vocation. The working backgrounds of the Candidates emphasise the diversity of those who are called to be Deacons. Tony works as a Business Manager for Centacare Catholic Social Services in the Diocese of Parramatta and has previously worked as a manager with NRMA, and as a newspaper journalist. Joseph operates his own Dental practice. Owen is retired and previously had 21 years with the Society of St Vincent de Paul in NSW and 27 years in the Royal Australian Navy.

They also bring their experiences as fathers and husbands, members of their local worshipping community and the various other activities they engage in.

For married Deacons, the Sacrament of Ordination is built upon the foundations of the Sacrament of Marriage. In fact, Tony, Joseph and Owen could not be Ordained without the written approval of Annette, Trish and Jeanette respectively. Far more than this, however, the wives have been an



important part of the formation process for their husbands. They have attended the year-long Certificate in Pastoral Formation conducted by the Institute for Mission and have also gone on to further Theological studies.

The three couples also engage in a regular Theological Reflection group and all six individuals receive monthly Spiritual Direction. In the months leading up to Ordination, the group will also undertake monthly formation meetings, a formation weekend and a retreat weekend. The men are required to undertake a Bachelor of Theology degree.

The Formation leadership team of Fr Chris de Souza (Episcopal Vicar for Formation and Director of Deacons) and Sr Linda Ferrington (Director of the Institute for Mission) are also supporting a group following the Candidate Group. This group has recently achieved the status of 'Aspirant' (second stage to becoming a Permanent Deacon) and comprises four couples: Beth and Willy Limjap, Margaret and Peter Moriarty, Carmen and Luis Ortiz, and Joeline and Enzieh Thomas.

Source: **Catholic Outlook**, Diocese of Parramatta



Deacon Profiles

Mark Kelly Drouin, Victoria

In only my third year of Diaconal ministry I'm a bit new to the game of being reflective about my ministry. But I'm going to be so anyway!

On ordination our Bishop appointed me to the parishes in partnership of Drouin and Warragul and to chaplaincy of the local Catholic college. Hilary and I moved (with our two small dogs) into the parish house beside our beautiful new church site in Drouin. Mid fifties and with gammy knees, my role is particularly bridging between youth and their Catholic parishes. What better time to take up such a ministry with World Youth Day in the offing!

We are very much involved in the life of the community, especially the church community, in the region. Marist-Sion College where I spend much of my week is a splendid school. I find it, and more importantly the students and families find it, warm, welcoming and encouraging in the Marist tradition which I know and love. The parishes are comfortable (with the positive and negative dimensions of that) with strong pastoral councils and developed programs in many areas and I also have some involvement in the neighboring parishes as well as ecumenically with the two Ministers Associations and various initiatives flowing from them. At a diocesan level, creation of a dynamic Youth Ministry structure and appointing personnel to further the WYD legacy has been a primary responsibility of mine.

My youth ministry over several years has been focused on World

Youth Day in Sydney where I was to be one of seven Chaplains among the five hundred pilgrims from Sale diocese. As it happened Hilary was desperately ill in the week leading up to WYD. Of course I didn't go to Sydney and, to be honest, that was a long way back in my priorities at the time. By the time the Pope was there, Hilary was out of danger and sitting up in bed. Whilst, I do regret missing the experience, I had a salutary lesson in what and who is really important to me. In any case, my job was mostly done in getting our young pilgrims to Sydney. The fruits are already obvious in many ways in our communities and parishes. During the WYD week a teenage boy rang me to ask about becoming a Catholic and I now have two 16 year olds and a young teacher in RCIA formation.



Our own four boys are spread to the four winds – one is drilling in outback WA while the youngest is a Naval officer. I had the rare privilege (for a Catholic clergyman) of presiding at another son's wedding during the year. None of the boys is what we might call "regular" in their

faith practice though they would fight you if you suggested they weren't Catholics. I hope I don't get drummed out of the core of deacons but I'm less stressed about that than I would once have been. I burst with pride in each of them. They are all fine citizens of firm integrity and holding good core values.

I have a similar approach to the young people in my pastoral care. One of the joys of the WYD ex-

perience is to find young people discovering their Catholic identity but by the same token, I celebrate young people who may never darken the doorstep of the church but find themselves working Vinnies soup vans of an evening or becoming passionate about social justice or participating meaningfully in spiritual reflection. And on all the "once a year" Catholics who still want something of Catholic values for themselves and their children. Ours is not to be judgmental or condemnatory but to make sure our doors and our arms are wide open to them, simply articulating the Word in our actions and leaving the rest between them and their Creator.

So where does the Reverend Deacon fit into all this? Well he tries to be wherever people are in need of him – liturgically to be sure, but particularly in walking with people as they engage their spirituality, hearing their story with empathy, rolling sleeves up around the fundraising barbeque, joining with them in trying to make sense out of the world around us and helping them to act accordingly.

IT EXPERTISE NEEDED

We need someone to keep the website www.deacon.asn.au up to date and up load AusDeacon News onto it.

We need a volunteer.

Can you?

Do you know someone who can?

Contact Bryan Sykes at besykes@bigpond.com

Deacon Profiles

Jim Curtain, Victoria

I was ordained a deacon for the Military Ordinariate (diocese) by Bishop Geoff Mayne on 23 September 1995 at the RAAF Chapel, Point Cook, Victoria. This was about the halfway point of my full-time RAAF career. For the first half of my RAAF career I worked in the personnel, financial, organisational development and training areas, but after ordination I worked as a Chaplain, providing pastoral and spiritual care to RAAF members and their families of all faiths and none.

Over the whole 26 years I served at RAAF bases in NSW, VIC, Malaysia, SA and QLD and I've seen active service in the Middle East and East Timor. I was very lucky through my RAAF chaplaincy time to work with a fine bunch of colleagues, Protestant, Anglican and Catholic. This has been one of the biggest graces of my ordination – the delight of team ministry. I was also lucky in that the priests, deacons and communities of the local dioceses that I worked in – Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane – were always welcoming and hospitable to Vicki and me.

Prior to the Air Force, I worked as a music teacher in schools and adult education. Since leaving full-time RAAF at the start of 2008 I've ministered as a school chaplain and my main ministry now (the 'day job') is as Director of Mission at St John of God Nepean Rehab Hospital, Frankston, VIC. I help out with sacramental ministry, preaching and music in my local parish (Nazareth parish, Rickett's Point) and will continue



with RAAF ministry on an occasional basis. I was a member of the formation committee for the Brisbane Diaconal program, and hope to become involved with the Melbourne program as it develops.

An image of diaconate that works for me is one I heard from an Anglican theologian some years ago. He said the deacon was the 'boundary rider'. Where the priest is at the centre of the local Christian community, its leader and inspiration, the deacon was the one who made sure that those on the margins and borders were included, and who called the church community to mission.

Most of us in our ministry work with people on the margins – whether it's the couple on the margins of church who come for marriage or a child's baptism, the worker in a church school or hospital who may

feel marginalised from the 'official' church, or the lonely old person, marginalised from society by age, poverty or infirmity, wanting the gift of our time. Certainly in my

work in the RAAF and Catholic schools and hospitals I've come across many who see themselves as marginalised from church or society and part of diaconal ministry for me is to try to show them the loving face of Christ, and demonstrate that the church is a place of joy. I realise of course that all Christians are called to do this, that the work of evangelism and care to those on the margins is not just restricted us deacons, but I do believe that it is a special call that can be traced in diaconal ministry from the Seven and our brother Lawrence onwards.

I have tertiary qualifications in theology, ministry, music, education and administration and particular interests in ethics and spirituality. I enjoy playing music and singing, and read a lot of history and murder mysteries. I also believe firmly that the Carlton football club will rise again and soon resume its rightful place as a power in the land.

Vicki and I have been married for 29 years, and we have two adult children, Christina and David. We're both Melbourne people, and as both children have settled down here this is probably where we'll stay!

The Lighter Side

The PP of a neighbouring parish asked me to do a wedding for him.

The organ was in the Choir loft, over the entry to the church, and the organist asked me to give her a nod when the bride was ready to process in.

I was in the sacristy vesting when I heard the bridal march start, I assumed the organist was practicing, but to my surprise when I looked out the door the bride was already standing in front of the altar - a good 5 minutes early. The first time I'd been beaten to the altar by a bride!

Send your **The Lighter Side** story to ncdeditor@bigpond.com as a word attachment.

Deacon Profiles



Roger O'Donnell

AFP family.

Former Chaplain to the Australian Federal Police.

Ordained in 1991. He served 20 years in the RAN, is a Vietnam Veteran, and was working in AFP criminal intelligence prior to commencing his theological studies at the Marist Seminary, Hunter's Hill, Sydney in 1988. He holds a Bachelor of Theology and a Masters of Arts in Theology. His previous appointments have been administrator of the Adelong & Batlow, parishes in southern NSW, Archdiocesan director of Missions and Deacon of the St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra. He was instrumental in the creation of the National Guidelines for the Permanent Diaconate in Australia. Roger has been married to Cora for 43 years – they are blessed with 3 married off-spring and 10 grandchildren.

The past 5 years has changed me forever – an incredible ministry as Chaplain to the AFP in the International Deployment Group [IDG]. During this time I've managed to be away in a deployment mission every six weeks or so - a lifetime of amazing experiences and memories as I pastorally responded to terrorist bombings in Jakarta, the tragic Garuda crash in Yogyakarta, repatriation of bodies, dozens of funerals, the aftermath of murders in the Solomon Islands, riots in the capital of Honiara, civil unrest in Dili, East Timor, suicides closer to home,



I was the first Catholic clergy to be appointed to the AFP, and my mandate from Commissioner Mick Keelty was to literally *'loiter with intent.'* My home base was at our Training Base at Majura which has a very large supporting staff. My liturgical 'home' was St Christopher's Cathedral for preaching, baptisms, wedding and funerals.



In 2003, there were no guidelines to follow because the IDG was just being established. IDG became my 'parish,' and pastoral 'family'. Put this into context – in 2003 there were around 40 AFP police officers serving overseas in Cyprus and East Timor. In 2009 there are over 700 police members with the UN in the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan, several

islands and in the North-Tory – and still only one although I was sometimes able to utilize the various State police Chaplains to assist me - many of our peace-keeping missions are composed of State and Federal police members - there are over 300 personnel in the Solomon Islands, many of these have been sworn into the AFP for the duration of their deployment – often up to 100 weeks.

I was privileged to accompany Commissioner Mick Keelty on a three day pre-Christmas corporate flight to Ularu, Alice Springs, Darwin, Dili and Honiara. What an extraordinary experience to support these dedicated police officers working in the most demanding and often quite dangerous conditions.

In September I was privileged to relax on a 30 day contemplative and meditative retreat to 'hear' the Lord and discern the future direction of my ministry after 17 years ordination - I turned 65 that month and on return to work, I choose to retire from this incredibly intense and reactive ministry and hand the mantle to a younger person. At my farewell, Assistant Commissioner Frank Prendergast presented me the Police Operations Medal and a large pictorial montage of my journey with the AFP since the 1980's. One of my colleagues reiterated my thoughts at the time – *'What a ride!'* he said. Indeed it was. Amen.



NCD Executive face to face meeting, February 15th 2009.

Do you have any thoughts or ideas you want to share with the executive which would promote formation and development of diaconal ministry?

besykes@bigpond.com

Deacon Profiles

Graeme R Davis*, Lismore

I was born in the Dongrayald Private Hospital in Lismore NSW, 6th July 1945, to a second generation Irish rural family. I was educated in the public system and enlisted at the age of seventeen into the Australian Regular Army on 25 February 1963 and posted to the 3rd Bn Royal Australian Regiment {3~ RAR} Qld.

I subsequently deployed to South Vietnam (Nui Dat) with 6 RAR in April 1966 and after an unfortunate encounter on the 18th August I was repatriated back to Australia in September the same year. My military service ended on obtaining the age of 55 with that rank of substantive Major.

I am married to Rosemary (31 December 1966) and we have two sons' both married to sweet young ladies and have been gifted with one special "gorgeous" granddaughter, (16 months old)

I seriously commenced my discernment and journey for the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of Brisbane mid 1999 on encouragement from brother Officers in the ADF and others.

This entry into formation was via study in Clinical Pastoral Education ~ Hospital Chaplaincy. (2 Units) My next discovery was taking up enrolment for a diploma in Systematic Theology (IFE Brisbane) and ultimately formal admission into ACU (National) for a Bachelor of Theology.

Around that same time I was accepted into formation and commenced my practical liturgical study for the Lismore diocese where I was in due course ordained by Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett DD on the Feast of St. Augustine of Hippo (28 August) 2007. *Deo Gratis*

On my day of Ordination I was appointed to exercise a pastoral ministry in the Cathedral parish of St Carthages Lismore.

My Faculty on ordination sets out my duties for parish ministry as; proclamation of the Gospel in the Sacred Liturgy; preaching; Chaplaincy to two hospitals; Chaplain to the Ambulance Service of NSW (Northern Region) Chaplain to the provincial Rescue Helicopter service, Chaplain to the Ex-Service community and three Aged Care facilities. I have been the Diocesan Director for Caritas Australia since 2000. I sit on the Diocesan Pastoral Council as well as the parish council and related working parties.

My interest outside my immediate family and vocation is social justice; reading and classical and time-honoured church music.

Persons who have had a foremost influence in my journey, I would have to say without question is my wife and family (without their support I don't believe I could deliver a sustainable outcome in public ministry). Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, Military Chaplains' and many of you permanent deacons from around the nation.

** R is very important in emails we discovered. Ed.*



PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives is a journal service provided by Faith & Life Vicariate of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Perspectives is published ten times per year.

We at *Faith & Life* receive a number of journals which cover a variety of theological and pastoral areas. We read and select around six articles from these each month and assemble them into an easy to read format.

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A annual subscription gives you access to about 20 journals and 60 articles from these journals. It is a very useful tool for ongoing formation for deacons.

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Faith & Life

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of
Brisbane

Liturgical Vestments

Deacons are required to vest appropriately for liturgical services (Directory 30). For the celebration of Mass, Liturgy of the Word with Communion and Liturgy of the Word without communion on Sundays and other times, a deacon wears an alb, stole and dalmatic. For Baptisms, Weddings and other liturgical rites, Latin Rite deacons wear an alb and stole of the appropriate liturgical colour and may also wear a cope. The cope is worn with the alb and stole for Exposition and Benediction also.

The purpose of the liturgical vestments is not to signify that the cleric is better than the lay person. It has nothing to do with the cleric's personal status and dignity but of the dignity of the liturgy by which Christ prays to the Father and for the world, through his body the Church, in the Holy Spirit. The vestments should be of a suitable quality to reflect the dignity of the liturgical action of the whole People of God. It would be a mistake for a cleric to focus on the vestments as a way of drawing attention to himself or his status.

Equally it is a mistake for clergy or laity to dismiss vestments as being unnecessary for the celebration of the liturgy. All the vestments could be dispensed with in cases of necessity or total unavailability as might happen following a flood, fire or earthquake or other event which destroyed the items. To discard liturgical vestment may in fact make the minister the centre of attention and not his ministry. It is not the minister who, ultimately, is the presider but Christ, who is



present as head and shepherd of assembly. Ordinary street clothes may divert our attention away from the theological reality, Christ presiding, in place of the reality of the senses, his minister.

When we look more closely at the vestments there is more to the meaning of them which can enrich our understanding and appreciation of the liturgy.

Alb

The alb is not a clerical vestment but the clothing of all the baptised. When a lay person or group of lay people lead a Liturgy of the Word on Sunday's they may vest in the alb. The lay servers or acolytes emphasise the ordinary character of this vestment as a baptismal gown and not a clerical vestment by wearing one in the liturgy. The alb is the symbol of the community of the New Creation, the priestly people, and the white robed army gathered around the throne and the Lamb (Rev 7:9-10).

A priest, bishop or deacon should be conscious of the deep Baptismal significance and the eschatological symbolism contained in the alb when he puts it on. Efforts should be made to educate servers, acolytes and the laity in general about the significance of the alb. A common practice to remind the minister of the significance of the alb is to recite this text from Scripture as he puts it on; "My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He has clothed me with the garment of righteousness and has covered me with a robe of gladness." (Isaiah 61:10)

In the East the *Sticharion* is the equivalent vestment to the alb. As deacons in the east only have the stole over this garment it is frequently rich decorated rather

than a plain white vestment.

Stole

The stole is a symbol of office. Wearing the stole over the left shoulder and gathered at the right hip, is a sign of the office of deacon in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. Eastern deacons wear the stole (*Orarion*) in a manner different from that of Latin Rite deacons. Neither may interchange the styles.

A stole is a sign that the minister is a person set apart by the sacrament of ordination to participate in Christ's ministry as head of the Body, the Church. Ordination is a consecration of the individual and a setting apart of this person for the task which the Church has discerned that Christ calls the one ordained to perform.

In putting on the stole, the deacon is putting on the sign of the apostolic office to which he has been called. The office which he performs is not his own but that of Christ as head of the Church (Introduction to the Norms and Directory #1). He should be conscious that he is "putting on Christ" in a particular way as head and distinguished from the Body. In maintaining this consciousness of putting on Christ's office he should become aware of the need to pray the words with mind and heart, just as they are set out in the liturgical books, because it is in the name Christ that he prays. When he preaches he does not want to share his own word but allow Christ to speak to the community and assist the people to receive the word of God.

Dalmatic

The dalmatic is an ancient vestment, originating the Dalmatian coast in modern day Croatia. The vestment became associated with the deacon in the West very early in the history of the Church. It should always be in the seasonal colour.

In many ways this is the most distinctive element of the deacon's vestments. Firstly, he is the only minister who normally wears this vestment, although a bishop may do so under his chasuble. Secondly it is the most visible and colourful because it is worn over the alb and stole.

The changing of the seasonal and festal colours is an important symbolic element of the liturgy. The changing colours remind us of the seasons and times of the liturgical year. They signify to the assembly that Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and yet we come to know him in different seasons of our year and of our life.

Our journey of faith is a journey through seasons and times which make different demands on us. Not only the liturgical seasons, which emphasise different aspects of the same Paschal Mystery, but also in our personal life journey there are different seasons. There are times of sorrow, times of joy, times of anguish and times of hope in our personal life stories which interact with the liturgical year and which are touched by the Paschal mystery and are embedded in the Incarnation.

Rejecting Vestments

There have been times and movements in the history of the Church which have witnessed the rejection of vestments. We know that many Christians worship, in Spirit and truth, without the use of liturgical vestments. We can respect that tradition and also hold onto our own.

In the Catholic tradition, both Eastern and Western, vestments have continued to play their part in the liturgy. We can offer to other Christian traditions a way of seeing in them symbols which point to deeper realities. Some argue that God does not need our vest-

ments. But God is not in need of anything, so it is hardly an argument to reject vestments based on what God needs. Ultimately the liturgy does not *need* our vestments since it is efficacious because it is a work of the Holy Spirit, but perhaps we can draw spiritual benefit from using vestments.

Supply of Vestments

While owning vestments is not a high order question in terms of the questions and issues that face deacons approaching ordination, it is an important question. There are significant issues concerning the truth of the vocation itself which will weigh upon the mind of the candidate more heavily as he prepares in his final months and weeks of formation before ordination. But at some point some one does have to think about vestments.

As deacons soon realise few parishes have dalmatics and deacon stoles, whereas there are many chasubles and priest stoles. A visiting priest can usually find suitable, if not always well fitting, vestments in the sacristy of any parish but not so the deacon. Clearly a supply of dalmatics and deacon stoles has to be made available by someone at some point.

Who should pay for these vestments? Perhaps the parish where the deacon mainly exercises his ministry should pay? Perhaps, as Deacon Bill Ditewig suggests in his book *Deacons and the Mass*, that the diocese should supply them for deacons. It would seem unreasonable and too expensive to expect that every parish in the diocese should have a set of deacon vestments just in case they had a visiting deacon.

In practice deacons often provide for vestments out of their own personal income. I am not convinced that this is the best way to go.

Although a priest or bishop may have some of his own personal vestments which he has purchased with his own money or has received as gifts from friends or parishioners, my guess would be that generally the parish pays for them as part of providing for the necessities of liturgical ministry.

Focus

Deacons perhaps need to discuss these practical questions with their bishop and candidates with their formation directors as the candidate gets close to ordination. Vestments, even simple ones made by a gifted tailor in a parish, can be an expense which is a lot to ask a deacon and his family to pay for. A fair and just resolution of the question which keeps in



mind that the vestments are not ultimately for the personal use of the deacon but function to enhance the liturgy could assist addressing this simple but important question.

Keep the focus clear. The question about vestments is of the practical order of things and they are not at the heart of the ministry. The supply and wearing of suitable vestments is to enhance the dignity of the liturgy and not the wearer.

Shared and diverse mission

Their (deacon's) authority, therefore, exercised in hierarchical communion with the bishop and his priests, and required by the same unity of consecration and mission, is a service of charity which seeks to help and foster all members of a particular Church, so that they may participate, in a spirit of communion and according to their proper charisms, in the life and mission of the Church. (Directory #37)

This section of the Directory has a focus on the pastoral ministry of the deacon. Notice that the authority, that is the authority to fulfil the office to which he is appointed, the deacon exercises in communion with the presbyters and bishop. He is not alone.

When the deacon is involved in pastoral ministry in the parish or diocese he participates in the same consecration for the work of the local church and mission which both presbyter and bishop have received. But each of them, presbyter, deacon and bishop participates in this mission in different ways. There is diversity in the communion of their common consecration and mission.

Charity or pastoral ministry is not in this sense the unique ministry of the deacon. Bishops and presbyters are also ministers of charity. Throughout the Directory charity is defined broadly and sometimes inconsistently. One only has to read through the sections of the Directory from #37-42 to see how broad in scope is the term "charity" used in the document. We would be doing a disservice to the document to read it too narrowly as good works or caring for the poor and marginal-

ised. And we would read it inconsistently if we said that "charity" was unique to the deacon, as paragraph 37 already tells us it is common to all the ordained.

Notice too that the object of the pastoral ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon is to foster or build up all the members of a particular church (diocese). By building up the laity in faith, recognising and encouraging the use of charisms with which the Spirit has endowed them the ordained fulfil their pastoral task.

The objective of pastoral ministry, according to #37, is to enable the laity to participate in that same spirit of communion or *koinonia* which characterises the Church in its life and mission. The life of the Church consists of the life of holiness, celebration of the Sacraments, prayer, discipleship and

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witness to the new life which we have founded together as one body in Christ, among other things.

The mission of the whole Church is the mission of Christ to the world. The Son was sent from the Father and we are sent by the Son in the Holy Spirit to continue that mission. This mission does have a social dimension, promotion of justice and peace and the works of charity but this does not exhaust the meaning of the mission.

Proclamation of the Kingdom of God is not identical with or restricted to the proclamation of peace and justice. Proclamation

includes the announcement that God's Kingdom has already come and that there is open to us a new way of being. This being is characterised by our being an effective sign and means of the sacramental realisation of intimate communion between God and humanity and the unity of the whole of humanity in Christ. Mission is also proclaiming the New Creation. The deacon, alongside of the presbyter and bishop helps the whole church to be formed for this mission.

Diaconia should bring people to an experience of God's love and move him to conversion by opening his heart to the work of grace. (Directory #38) As we know, from Scripture, diakonia, is the ordinary word for ministry. Lumen Gentium, 24, described the work of the bishop as a diakonia. Thus all who are engaged in the ministry are ultimately about the work of conversion and grace.

It is for this reason that the directory advises that deacons (and all ministers) should always strive to avoid unnecessary forms of bureaucracy, lest they deprive their ministry of pastoral meaning and value. (#42)

Whether the deacon has a role as chancellor of a diocese, an administrator in an ecclesial organisation like Centacare or chaplain to a school, his ministry is a pastoral service, meeting the diverse spiritual and material needs of people.

Those means which encourage constructive and patient collaboration between deacons and others involved in the pastoral ministry should be promoted with generosity and conviction. (#41) The deacon works in communion with others in pastoral ministry and efforts should be made to coordinate the common pastoral work of all, in a respectful manner. We are after all, not about our own mission, but the mission of Christ.

Ministry of the Word

Preparation is Not One Time Only

The Ministry of the Word like so much else in the Directory is defined broadly and flexibly. There is the big picture ministry (diakonia) of the Word, which is the subject of Acts 6:1-8 and following and diakonia tou logou (ministry of the Word) remains central to the identity of the deacon.

Ministry of the word includes preaching, teaching, direct instruction and witness to a way of life. It also embraces works of charity and justice which flow from the intimate union of mission which flows from being immersed in the Word of God.

The principal function of the deacon, therefore, is to collaborate with the bishop and the priests in the exercise of a ministry which is not of their own wisdom but of the word of God, calling all to conversion and holiness. (Directory 23) Throughout Acts of the Apostles, diakonia is only used in reference to the ministry of the Word. The whole episode of the choosing of the Seven concludes with, and the Word of God continued to spread (Acts 6:7).

The Directory advises that; "He prepares for such a ministry by careful study of Sacred Scripture, of Tradition, of the liturgy and of the life of the Church." (# 23) The requirement for the ongoing formation makes clear that initial formation, a degree in theology (ACBC Guidelines #33) and the diocesan pre-ordination formation program is not enough for the task of ministry. Deacons have to look toward their ongoing formation as a life long task.

Four sources

The ministry of Word requires careful study of four sources which will enrich the ministry of

the deacon. These sources are: Sacred Scripture, the Tradition or teachings of the Church, liturgy and the life of the Church. A preparation which focuses on Scripture alone would not adequately prepare a deacon for the ministry of the Word.

Notice too, that it is a careful preparation. That is not a passing acquaintance with the sources but immersion in them and study of them. We thought our days of study were over when we submitted that last assignment for the B Theol! In reality we have signed up for a life time of study and reflection.

Many of us would practice daily, *lectio divina*, using the Scriptures as a sources and become familiar with Scripture by this method. *Lectio* is not so much about an

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Directory 23

intellectual understanding of the Word but ruminating on it and letting it get into our bones.

Other texts such as GIRM, the prayers of the Mass, an encyclical or the writings of the saints and doctors of the Church as well as many other things, can also be used fruitfully in lectio.

Not alone

Deacons are not alone in the requirement to be immersed in the careful study of the sources. Presbyters and lay pastoral workers with whom the deacon works or knows are also obliged to be so immersed. It is possible that groups of deacons might come together to organise their own ongoing formation.

If you are fortunate enough to have other deacons nearby why not consider forming a study

group. The group might decide to meet monthly to reflect on some aspect of doctrine or liturgy. They could choose a common book to study and have a kind of theological book club, with wine and cheese to make the study more pleasant. Deacons could form study groups with other deacons or other Catholics and each subscribe to the same journal and each month one could choose lead a discussion on an article.

Serving the Word properly

I once had an experience at Mass where the minister preached for some length on a topic. He had several pages of typed notes from which to read. At the end of Mass a woman approached the preacher and said how uncomfortable she had been through out his homily. The minister looked a little shocked at her response to his carefully prepared homily. She said the cause of her concern that was that while he made some good points the major point he wished to make was a flat contradiction of what the Church taught. She even suggested which section of Vatican II and the Catechism to look in for the right teaching.

I was relieved to hear her have this frank exchange because I too had picked up that he had got it all completely wrong. It was a salutary lesson for me about preparing well by going to the sources and not relying on my own beliefs.

Each of us is called to serve the Word properly by preparing well and preparing prayerfully using the resources of the Church to help form us in the Word which we must proclaim.

Why not share your thoughts on the liturgical/sacramental, pastoral or word ministry with your brother deacons.



An invitation

This newsletter is a publication which belongs to all Catholic deacons in Australia.

You are invited to contribute to the newsletter.

Write a profile.

Tell us who you are. Let us know about your formation, your ministry and whatever else you would like to share. Please send a digital photo so that we can all put a face to the name.

Write a ministry article.

Tell us about your ministry. What are you involved with in your diocese? What have you learned from your ministry? What advice, experience or wisdom can you pass on to your brother deacons? Send a digital photo of you in your ministry.

Write an ongoing formation article.

Each issue we try to reflect on the three aspects of diaconal ministry: word, pastoral and liturgical/sacramental. Why not research one of these, draw on the Directory and help with the ongoing formation of your brother deacons. Each edition we have two short (one page) articles and one longer reflection (three pages).

Write from a wives perspective.

Wives of deacons, aspirants and candidates are invited to share their perspective on the journey of formation and life after ordination. We are looking for a page and a digital photo.

Write about deacon news.

Tell us some of the news about deacons and your diocese. What is happening with formation, appointments, events, people and places? Are their prayer requests, births, deaths, marriages and other stuff that you would want to share? These can be as short as a paragraph. If possible send a digital photo.

Write a letter.

Send a short letter and express an opinion about something you have read, heard or feel passionately about. Keep it short.

Write about an event.

Is there an event coming up in your diocese or Australia or overseas that you would like to promote or advertise that deacons may be interested to know about?

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