



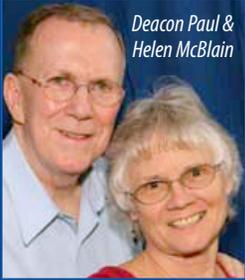
NDICE NEWS

NATIONAL DIACONATE INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

DECEMBER, 2017

VOLUME 1 • NO. 3

President's Message



Deacon Paul & Helen McBlain

When our children were young and living at home, the First Sunday of Advent introduced a marked change in our family routine. The Advent candle would appear on the middle of the dining room table. An Advent calendar would be properly positioned on the refrigerator in order that even the smallest child would be able to

reach up and mark off the days.

Pencils and papers would become apparent as the children would begin to create their Christmas wish list. And for those children who could not yet write, pages would be torn out of catalogs or circulars and miraculously appear on Daddy's desk or next to Mom's sink.

It even seemed as if the chores would be done on a more regular and more complete basis than in the previous weeks and months. Yes, the First Sunday of Advent clearly indicated that Christmas was coming to the McBlain household.

Children are great at focusing in on something they really want.

For the next few weeks, most children's attention will be pretty much exclusively looking toward that great day of December 25th.

As parents, Helen and I had the responsibility of reminding our children that Advent is not just about getting ready to receive gifts and presents.

As deacons, we have the responsibility of helping our parishioners (and sometimes ourselves) to rediscover the wonder of the coming of Christ.

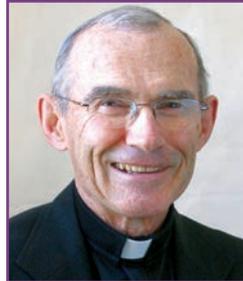
The Word of God that we will hear over the next few weeks, with calls to repentance and admonitions to be alert and vigilant, are clear indications of where our focus and attention need to be. We have only a few short weeks until Christmas. How are we going to help our pastor and our parish this Advent?

Be watchful! Be alert! Our God is coming!

—Deacon Paul McBlain, President - NDICE



Deacon Paul McBlain and his wife recall past memories of Advent with their children in his NDICE President's Message. Continuing the McBlain Advent tradition this year are daughter Kathleen with her grandchildren (left to right) Gabriela, Robbie and Anthony as they prepare for the First Sunday of Advent on December 3.



ADVENT: The Four W's

by Bishop Robert Morneau

Beginnings are important: the start of the day, a meal, a project, or an essay on Advent. The best way to begin is prayer. Here is a powerful oration from the old sacramentary for the first Sunday of Advent. Please spend five minutes praying it:

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.

Increase our longing for our Savior and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of your coming may find us rejoicing in your presence and welcoming the light of his truth.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Advent invites us to prepare our minds and hearts to more deeply welcome the Lord into our lives. True, Jesus is already here in word and sacrament, in the community and in the depth of our being. But the Lord keeps coming in new and surprising ways. If we are properly disposed, our refugee Jesus will find a gracious welcome.

Properly disposed! The great Dominican theologian Yves Congar advises: ". . . avoid what the world offers – superficial excitement, entertainment, futile and wretched hedonism in many different forms, noise, fever, a lack

of moral discipline and a thousand attractions that distract, hurt and even disintegrate us" (cf. I Believe in the Holy Spirit, II, 115). Advent has to contend with cultural stimuli that can overwhelm us. Much grace is needed to remain focused on the mystery of the Nativity of our Lord. If we watch and wonder, wait and welcome, our Christmas feast will be truly blessed.

WATCH! Throughout scripture we are reminded to be alert, pay attention, be prepared for we know not the day or hour when the Lord will come. The Advent wreath assists our Advent watch. Each week we light another candle to scatter the darkness of winter nights. Jesus is the light and, if we watch, we will recognize him in the cry of the poor, the beauty of a poem, an act of kindness. God's grace is present wherever truth, beauty, and goodness are.

WONDER! We need but look into a night sky and perceive the starry heavens. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins reminds us: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God!" The first revelation is creation and the feast of the Nativity gives us the fullness of revelation in Jesus. We must pray to retain a sense of reverence and wonder in a world filled with crassness and violence. Too easily our senses are dulled and our hearts hardened.

WAIT! We hate to wait: at grocery

~ Continued on page 6

Advent

by Deacon Robert Pallotti

In the film series, *John Adams*, Paul Giamatti, who played John Adams, was coming to the end of his earthly life and was walking with his son, John Quincy Adams, talking. He suddenly spots a small flower in bloom and stops dead in his tracks, looking at the flower in wide-eyed wonder and joy. Then he remarks, "Rejoice evermore, rejoice, rejoice," "Oh how I wished I had this wisdom when I was younger." This was a moment of epiphany for him, now he understands the wonder that is creation, the wonder that is life, and the sheer joy that what stands behind it all is the faithful God who promises us a loving and joy-filled future.

The reaction of Adams was predicated on the understanding that we waste much of our lives in fear and so instead of Christian joy, life becomes a relentless burden and fear becomes the mode of life. In our nation a new wave of fear is being experienced because of terrorist activity. A vile form demagoguery that is raising a rabid form of fear

—Joy that
Comes from
the Promise



wants to ban all Moslems from the United States because of the acts of extreme and violent groups like ISIS who hide under the cover of a perverted ideology that masks itself as Islam. Such fear becomes paralyzing and leads to inhuman behavior. The very fabric of our society would be greatly torn asunder by adopting such a practice as exclusion of entire, and most often, innocent people. This we cannot allow! We have seen it before in the Red Scare in the 1920's, the McCarthy hearings in the 1950's, and the internment of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor. We do not want that again!

The noted Psychiatrist, Gerry Gampolsky, wrote a book called, "Love is Letting Go of Fear," He notes

that there are two primary responses to life, love or fear. Fear generates a life of suspicion, anxiety, anger, depression and cruelty. Love yields a life of confidence, trust, compassion and that deep inner joy that life is meaningful despite the tragic and sorrowful events in life.

Advent, when we joyfully prepare for the arrival of Jesus Christ with the fullness of God's Reign, summons forth in believers love for oneself, others, the world and God. John tells us what that is to look like—be just, care for each other, tell and bear witness to the truth. This is how we are to witness to our faith in the One who has come, is present and who will come in the future—there is no other way, and certainly it is not the way of fear, hatred, revenge and brutality. That is why we are an Advent people, we do not compromise our joy for the newest fear trends, and the hate and violence they inspire. Our faith and gaze remain on the Lord and his promise, not the empty promises of ambitious demagogues that want to capitalize on peoples fear and need for security. In a world where nuclear weapons are spreading to areas of regional conflicts and ones that will be impacted by climate change in outbreaks of famine and severe shortages of drinking water, it is time for Advent people, to announce the one who is to return by manifesting the love of Christ in all dimensions of life.

I ask myself a question every now and then; can people see the Christian joy in my life in care for others, of love no matter the cost, or do they see a frightened and cowardly person willing to hide behind fear, hatred, suspicion of the alien, and a willingness to tolerate the threat of nuclear war? I am still seeking my answer, how about you? 🙏

Deacon Robert Pallotti is Diaconate Director for the Hartford, CT Archdiocese..

Deacon Sil's

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Continuing Education for Deacons

by Jim Alt

Prior to ordination, every diocese has a formation program that varies in length and content, depending on the policy for that particular diocese. This policy is set to meet the basic requirements for ordination of every deacon to be ordained in the United States. Consequently, a formation program may vary from diocese to diocese, each designed to meet the needs of that diocese and the wishes of the bishop and diaconate director of the diocese.

Most of the nearly 200 U.S. dioceses have established diaconate formation programs that follow the established requirements set in the guidelines for diaconate programs in the United States, in addition to meeting the particular needs of their diocese, regardless of the size of the diocese. So, even though formation programs may vary somewhat from diocese to diocese, the end result is that there IS a uniformity for the deacon candidate to be ordained to the diaconate.

While formation programs have improved tremendously over the years since the first U.S. deacon was ordained in 1968, to a lesser degree, the post-ordination continuing education programs in many cases have not kept pace. As in any profession, whether in the medical field, in

education or in industrial fields, it is essential that ordained deacons also continue their diaconate ministry education.

"Deacons, as professionals in ministry, need to update themselves constantly with practical education and spiritual development to insure adequacy in their ministry. Not only does continuing education have a further, collateral benefit of fostering self-confidence in the deacon, it moreover demonstrates to the Church the deacon serves that he is professionally accountable. This is a program based upon self-motivation and self-direction." (Opening paragraph of the Chicago Policy for the Ministerial Development of Deacons)

All dioceses have their own requirements for this post-ordination continuing education.

One such diocesan diaconate program is that of the Chicago, Illinois Archdiocese. We are grateful to Deacon Richard Hudzik, Archdiocesan Diaconate Vicar, for granting permission to NDICE NEWS to make available to ALL U.S. diocesan diaconate directors what they (Chicago) have for their policy of the ministerial development of their ordained deacons. Their policy provides deacons of the archdiocese with a standardized method

of evaluating their efforts, basic requirements, recording of credit hours and submission of reports for inclusion in personnel files.

Mindful that this is the policy that "works" for the Chicago archdiocese, we encourage you to look at this Chicago statement of the deacon's obligation with respect to continuing education. (To see the entire 4-page Chicago policy, go to deacons.archchicago.org.)

We invite diocesan directors to bring to our attention the continuing education policy and programs they offer to the deacons in their diocese.

The National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education (NDICE) enters the picture by providing the opportunity for deacons to receive 20 Continuing Education Units at our annual summer conference each year, which may assist a deacon in fulfilling his yearly education requirement.

NDICE is the longest-continuous national continuing education organization, for deacons in the United States. Next year will mark the 44th year of this Conference. 

Jim Alt with his wife Audrey "founded" Deacon Digest magazine in 1984.



Deacon Pin

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Deacon 25 year anniversary	n/a		
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Clutch Back Pin Back

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NDICE Planning and Goals Formulated

1977

The National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education, heretofore referred to as NDICE, held its third conference at the University of Notre Dame on August 4-7, 1977. The theme of this Third Annual Meeting was "Education for Service", and the keynote speaker was Msgr. John Egan, Administrative Assistant to the president of Notre Dame. Workshops focused on new diaconal ministries, family counseling, evangelization, death and dying, gerontology, cultural pluralism, hospital ministry, spirituality, justice and peace, and the celibate deacon.



1977 NDICE Program
Chairman—
Deacon Stanley Gogol

Coordinator of this NDICE meeting was Deacon Joseph Newman, from the diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. Program chairman was Deacon Stanley Gogol from the Toledo, Ohio diocese; liturgy chairman was Deacon Sam Bues from the Lansing, Michigan diocese. Deacon

Robert Goetz from the Archdiocese of Detroit served as Master of Ceremonies and Deacon Jack Zellmer from the Arlington, Virginia diocese was Secretary.

Stated as the three general purposes of this institute were to:

- 1) Provide a two-way avenue of communication between NDICE and the Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate (BCPD).
- 2) Further the theological, spiritual and pastoral developments of diaconal ministry through an annual institute;
- 3) Promote ministry in the context of cultural pluralism to Blacks, American Indians, the Spanish-speaking, and others. Attendees and organizers said they hoped to bring together deacons, wives and families from different geo-graphical backgrounds in order to share ideas and programs in serving the needs of all humanity.

One hundred permanent deacons and fifty wives from throughout the United States attended this meeting. Bishop William McManus of the host

diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend told the attendees to be 'ministers of the street and not necessarily ministers of the sanctuary.' He said that it is "out there" where church communities are in these days of "diminishing parish communities." You are 'out there', in the street where the Church needs to be."

Msgr. Ernest (Bud) Fiedler, Executive Director of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate (BCPD) told the attendees what he considers the greatest concerns facing the permanent deacons today.

"The permanent diaconate has reached the stage of adolescence and we should be astonished that we have grown so rapidly. "You need to be recognized as a man of service, a living sign of the sacrament of service." He said that the liturgical ministry only takes on its proper aspect when the deacon is recognized for his service in the community.

Stressing the importance of permanent deacons in the Church today, Msgr. John Egan, Director

~ Continued on page 6

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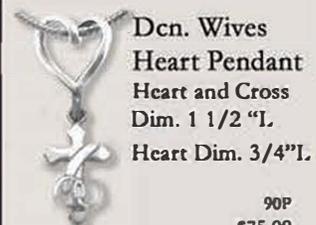
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Boo n' Tib!

A popular feature at every NDICE conference is Deacon Hank Babin, aka "Boudreaux." As past attendees to NDICE know, ya gotta hear Hank's Cajun delivery to really appreciate. Here is Boudreaux discussing his "remedy" for curing a cold with Thibodeaux:

Thibodeaux had been struggling with a very bad cold. He decided to get out of the house and visit Boudreaux to get his mind off it and maybe get a little relief.

"Wat's da matta witchu, Thibodeaux?" asked Boudreaux. "Ya look like ya don't feel so hot, you."

"Haw, non. Ah got me dis bad, bad cold," replied Thibodeaux. "Man, ah sneeze and ah cough all da time, me. Ah tink ahm goin' hafta go ta da dockta and git someting fo' it."

"Ya don't gotta do dat, non," said Boudreaux. "Ah kno zackly wat ta do fo' dat, me."

"Watchu talkin' abot?" inquired Thibodeaux.

"Sha, jis take you a bottle o' milk o' magnesia, a box o' ex-lax and a can o' prune juice and mix dem all togedda real good. Den ya drink it straight down."

"Dat's goin' cure ma cold?" asked Thibodeaux.

"Aw, non," answered Boudreaux, "but it sho goin' make ya tink twice befo' ya cough or you sneeze!"

Mary Bolin (by Chance graphics) designs and prepares each issue of the **NDICE NEWS** newsletter. She is available to assist you with all your diaconate community media-related projects.

Contact her at mebbolin@psci.net or call (812) 719-2250

~ Advent The Four W's...continued from page 1

stores, for a response to a text or email, for a relationship to heal. As kids we couldn't wait to open our Christmas presents. So too in prayer. If after two or three minutes we don't hear the Lord's voice we move to "greener" pastures. Going to our interior castle takes time.

WELCOME! Advent is about hospitality, having an open mind and heart to what the Lord calls us to do and be. We still hear the refrain "there is no room in the inn": for immigrants or challenges to change. Nonessentials clutter our lives. Advent calls us to

create space for our besieging God and our needy neighbor.

It is good to start an essay with a prayer and to end it in the same way: "Gracious and loving God, help us to encounter and accompany Jesus this Advent in new ways. As a pilgrim people we need your presence day after day. Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

Bishop Robert Morneau is Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus for the Diocese of Green Bay. Pastor of Resurrection Catholic Church, he is a popular author and speaker.

~ NDICE Planning...continued from page 4

of the Center for Pastoral and Social Concerns at Notre Dame, said 'I don't think there is a movement in the Church about which I am more proud. You are an important part of the structure of the new Church.' The permanent diaconate did not come a moment too soon. Questions which are presently unresolved will be resolved by you,' he said. 'Maybe the Church is asking too much of you, to commit yourselves to a ministry of service with your family responsibilities.'

He said the permanent diaconate had come at a time when there is 'wonderful, exciting chaos in the world,' and that the permanent diaconate, born out of Vatican II, 'was one of those magnificent developments the Roman Catholic Church has not yet had time to digest.'

He reminded the deacons that they must always be servants, and to maintain 'fertile receptiveness' to hear the needs of the community. 'The function of the deacon only exists in relation to the needs of the community,' he stressed.

Chairman of the Institute, Deacon Joseph Newman of Cleveland, Ohio said he felt the institute—which grew out of the meeting in Collegeville —proved the need for a national gathering of deacons. 'There is a great need today to face up to the tensions and problems of an emerging new form of ministry in service,' he said.

Speaking of the deacon's need for continuing education, Bishop James Hickey of Cleveland, former rector of the North American College in Rome, said "continuing education is an essential obligation of your ordination as permanent deacons. But make sure it is clearly rooted in the essential teachings of the Church."

"You are not men to 'do your own thing' or 'preach your own thing.' You speak and act in the name of the Church and it is most important that continuing education keeps you aware of what the teaching of the Church speaks to us."

"Continuing education is not added to the role of deacon. It's a part of the role," he added.

ASSISTING DIACONATE COMMUNICATION

This December issue of NDICE NEWS is emailed to ALL U.S. diocesan diaconate directors AND to attendees at the Annual NDICE Conference. The newsletter is available to be forwarded AT NO COST to ALL members of the diocesan diaconate communities.

The National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education (NDICE) is the Publisher of the NDICE NEWS newsletter. NDICE President Deacon Paul McBlain (aldanmac1@comcast.net) is Editor and members of the NDICE Board serve as Assistant Editors.

All graphics for the NDICE NEWS newsletter are done by Mary Bolin, who designs and prepares each issue of the newsletter, assisted by Jim Alt.

The NDICE NEWS newsletter is emailed to U.S. diocesan diaconate directors and to NDICE Conference attendees by Jim Alt.

Contact Mary Bolin at mebbolin@psci.net (812) 719-2250 and/or Jim Alt at jalt6@new.rr.com (920) 632-7877 for help with your communication needs. They are available to help you with your newsletters, brochures, flyers, direct mail pieces, magazine ads, logo design, print or online ads, and other graphic design/marketing related projects.

We welcome your comments and suggestions related to the NDICE NEWS!