

Sacred Heart Beat Newsletter

MAY 2007

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Church Draws on Members' Faith, Skills, Generosity

Habit of Service Grows Diaconate Vocation

Tom Proulx has already spent thousands of hours preparing to become a deacon. He will invest several hundred more before he is ordained some two years from now. And Tom says his experience has been so rewarding he'd do it all over again.

"I would encourage anyone who's interested to get involved with the diaconate program. I know I get a lot of satisfaction out of working with other people, and being a deacon is a life of service." Tom said.

A volunteer for many years with programs like St. Vincent de Paul, Hospice, and the Knights of Columbus, Tom felt becoming a deacon was the next logical step. "My faith is strong and Deacon Jim Hotte had approached me in the past about becoming a deacon. So I thought about it and it made a lot of sense to me," he said.

The decision wasn't made lightly, however. During an early trip to Wadhams Hall as he moved forward with his investigation of the diaconate program, Tom found himself in the chapel of the former seminary.

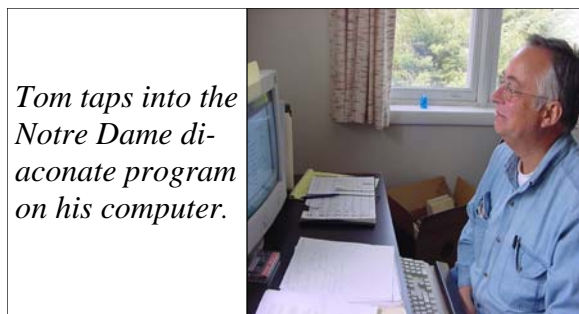
"I was a little hesitant at first. I was sitting in the chapel, and I said, 'What the heck am I doing here?' But God works in strange ways. As I continued, a little voice said, 'You belong here.' I went to Linda, my wife, and told her I had made the right decision," Tom added.

The Journey Was Gradual

His journey began a few years ago when he took the Formation for Ministry Program. The two-year, weekly study got the ball rolling for his interest in becoming a deacon because it is also a prerequisite for the diaconate program. Tom said he really en-

joyed the work and decided to continue.

Before he is ordained a deacon in September 2009, he will have invested a total of six years of study and preparation. In addition to his diaconate studies, Tom has also been taking courses on-line from Notre Dame to augment his learning.



Tom taps into the Notre Dame diaconate program on his computer.

Approximately two dozen other men from throughout the Diocese began preparations to become deacons a year ago. Only 15 are still part of the program. The candidates go to Wadhams Hall from Friday night through Saturday night for five months, Tom said.

"Wives were encouraged to go with us. Wives are a big part of this and they have a program to work with them as well. Our wives have to be part of the decision to become a deacon and we need their approval and involvement." While deacons can indeed be married, should they become widowed, they do not re-marry, Tom pointed out.

Beginnings of Diaconate Program In Diocese

Father Don Manfred was the first director of the diaconate program for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. While a pastor at St. Lawrence Church in North Lawrence, he was asked by then Bishop Stanislaus Brzana to start the program.

He, too, said the potential effects on a deacon's family are taken into consideration. "It's a great deal of work and a commitment of time. There's quite a screening process, including a background check and psychological tests. We ask, 'Is this a stable person?' And, of course, his wife has to be committed to it

also,” Father Don said.

“A deacon shares in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. We are all ordained: deacons, priests, bishops. Deacons are ordained for service of the Church and they are directly responsible to the bishop. The bishop will give a deacon his ministry and the ministries can be as varied as the needs of the Church are,” according to Father Don.

The deacons get a very extensive education and formation in the Church teaching, theology, scripture, spirituality according to Father. “They can perform a number of the same duties as priests and must be prepared to do wake services, funerals, burials, weddings, baptisms, and hospital ministry.”

They must be willing to make a commitment to do church ministry in the future over the long term,” according to Fr. Don. “A large number of our deacons are chaplains in the local state prisons.”

While being held to such high standards and put through a rather lengthy and involved process can be taxing, the rewards are significant. “It is a great program and a great way to serve,” noted Tom. “Deacons don’t serve as a substitute for priests; we’re an assistant to them. We’re there to help the priests and the parish community. I would really encourage other men to join.”



Linda, joins in the reading and discussions along with Tom

Wives: Important Piece Of The Program

Wives of the deacon candidates have an opportunity to be involved. You can imagine the husband’s formation and later ministry deeply affects the family dynamics.

Sr. Donna Franklin, DC and Gayle Frank, wife of Deacon Gary Frank, coordinate the Women’s Program of the Diaconate Studies.

We attend the Wadhams Hall monthly programs with our husbands. We attend Mass and the Prayer of Christians with them. We also gather with them for meals and socials.

And when they are in their classes, we have our own prayer and sharing gatherings, guest speakers, and so on. Most importantly, we have a chance to bond with the other wives. There is nothing like support from others who have shared similar joys and concerns.

Tom and his wife, Linda, live at 21 Douglas Rd. and are the parents of four children: Dale, Donna, Ann and Alice.

Purpose Still Found for Religious Life

Some of them are easily identified in the traditional black habit and veil. Others are a bit more civilian-like looking in their attire. Many of them go about their daily tasks in the background of our community. But one thing is certain, no matter what their Order, they are all here to serve God and do their best to spread His word.

There are many different Congregations/Orders women may choose from when being called by God to this way of life. Three such are represented between Massena and Louisville.



SERVANTS OF MARY

In 1840, 19-year-old Marie Barbe Guyot was invited by Mlle. Brocard of Langres, France, to teach young girls in the village of Cuves. Under Marie’s influence, several of the teachers expressed a desire for religious life, and thus began the nucleus of the Sisters of Calvary. Having been forced from France during the turbulent 1840’s and 50’s they settled in London and were amalgamated to the 13th century Order of Servants of Mary.

“For the Servants of Mary, our charism is expressed in her (Mary’s) compassion, Sr. Juliana noted. “Our Lady of Sorrows has been a key devotion. In our

prayer life and ministry we try to live with Mary's awareness, being attuned to the sorrows in peoples' lives and to help and support them how ever we can."



Sr. Juliana Fitzpatrick, OSM & her Servite companions traveled to Nebraska to enter the Community.

"Religious congregations have a purpose and are still alive," she stated. "There are still women and men who want to center their lives around Jesus in a special way. There are still a lot of people for whom the Lord's touch and call are important."

The women in the Servants of Mary have served in educational, nursing, counseling, and pastoral works. More information on the Order may be found online at: www.osms.org



DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

Before being known as saints, Vincent de Paul and Louise Marillac responded to the needs of the hospitals and parishes in France, and were the corner stones in founding the Ladies of Charity in 1617. The Daughters of Charity developed in 1633 to assist the Ladies. They responded to the poor, the orphans, galley slaves, and those who were sick at home and in the hospitals.



Besides ministering at St. Lawrence Parish, Sr. Evelyn McCarte, DC helps Catholic Charities with Offenders Groups.

"Each community has a special charism, and ours is service to the poor. This service is what appealed to

me," Sr. Evelyn said. "This is what keeps me alive within my own vocation. We know there are many living in poverty: families, the elderly and handicapped. The poor are with us always."

The Daughters of Charity focus on social service and health care. More information on their Order may be found online at: www.dc-northeast.org.



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

The Jesuit priest, Fr. Jean Pierre Medaille was the founder of the Congregation in the mid-1600's in France. It was in 1823 when the first Sisters of St. Joseph left France and arrived in the diocese of St. Louis. The Sisters became deeply involved with the life of the locality.

"We reach out to our neighbors—making sure they are taken care of," Sr. Maureen said. "There is a great devotion to the Eucharist. Compassion is our charism."



Working with parishioners in prayer groups, on council & projects keeps Sr. Maureen busy.

When making her decision to become an SSJ, Sr. Maureen said, "My priorities had to change. There are many challenges, but God always provides."

"We're witness to the teachings of Jesus by doing works of charity: by reaching out to the poor, by teaching, by listening to stories, encouraging them to live their faith no matter what station they come from," she said of those they assist.

The Sisters of St. Joseph focus on educating in diocesan schools, pastoral ministry and working in diocesan offices. For more information on the Congregation, go online to: www.ssjwatertown.org

SUMMER BRINGS TRANSFERS New Hunting Grounds for Fr. Kevin

Fr. Kevin McEwan will still be doing the usual priestly chores he has done here at Sacred Heart, but he may be adding late night Masses and “catechetical coffees” with university students at Plattsburgh State College.

Father’s tour of duty since ordination has taken him to Saranac Lake with its satellite parishes and Sacred Heart/Louisville, Massena.

What have been the good things experienced while here at Sacred Heart? “Making friends with so many wonderful people,” Father said. “I give heartfelt thanks to all the families who made me feel welcome, a part of their lives.”

To the question: what is he looking forward to in Plattsburgh? Fr. Kevin thought a moment and answered, “New experiences I will have like working with the college kids at Newman Center.”

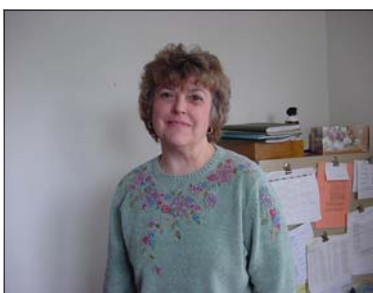
We all wish you well, Fr. Kevin. We will miss those personal episodes shared with us in your homilies. Don’t forget us!



Fr. Kevin looks forward to new challenges—and hunting grounds..

Gracious & Ever Up-beat, We’ll Miss You, Mary Emily

Sacred Heart Parish is losing a remarkably dedicated religious education director in Mrs. Lauzon. For over 12 years Mary Emily has cheerfully organized children, parents, catechists and programs for our parish.



Mary Emily with her many ideas and projects kept us busy.

She leaves to take up a pastoral position at St. Patrick Parish, Chateaugay, with Fr. Frank Coryer. This will be closer to home and will allow her more family time.

Focus On Faith

“The Power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow.” (Luke 1:35)

It has taken many years for me to understand that when I am hesitant about something or unclear about a matter, I might do better by seeing it as the shadow of God’s Holy Spirit over and around me, rather than a problem. Only now can I accept a bit my darkness and lack of an answer or direction and wait. But wait with expectation, not anxiety.

May is Mary’s month. May 27 is the Feast of the Holy Spirit. How appropriate, Mary and the Holy Spirit are together now, as in Jesus’ time. If you can’t spend time reflecting on the following Scripture passages, at least commit yourself to open your Bible and read these:

Luke 1

Luke 3:21-22

John 19:28-30

Acts 1:13-14 & 2:1-4

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Laurie and Karl Lowenstein married Saturday, May 5 at Sacred Heart Church.

Laurie has provided guitar music for our 4:30 PM Saturday Masses for many years.

To both of you, happiness and God’s special blessings.

OUR NEWLY-BAPTISED MEMBERS

Evan Chad, son of Nina (Charter) and Chad Bovay.

Katie Alesis, daughter of Mandy (Reynolds) and Ross Bishop

Benjamin Gerard, son of Erin (Solur) and Matthew Draper

Christina Marie, daughter of Tina (Weit) and Chris Radel.

Parker Sean, son of Jennifer (O’Shaughnessy) and Sean O’Neil.

Kristine Terry and Shane Cameron at Easter Vigil this year.

Contributors: Ken Bellor, Joe Gray, Sr. Juliana, Paul Haggett, Pamela Ouimet, Pat Pellegrino.