

March 2010

# Deacon Data



*Newsletter for  
the Diaconate  
Community of  
Northeast  
Nebraska*

March 15, 2010

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## Message from the President...Deacon Ernie Abbott-St. Stephen The Martyr

As I write this the Deacon Council has just completed our annual dinner with Archbishop Lucas. This year was the first such dinner with the new Archbishop. It was an enjoyable evening on a Lenten friday with the Archbishop. Archbishop Lucas let us know that he is

**Inside This Issue:** Message From The President Pg.'s 1-5  
Formation Information Pg.'s 2-4  
Third Saturday Articles Pg.'s 6&7  
Events Calendar Page 8



## **Formation Topics & Summaries**

### **Ronda and Gary Bash Urban Class 33**

Father Mike Eckley, Pastor at the St. Augustine Indian Mission, presented a six week course on Ecclesiastical History or Church History. Our text was "A Short History of the Catholic Church". Both the text and Fr. Eckley gave a detailed account of our Church from it's beginnings to the Protestant Reformation. Fr.

currently over-scheduling himself in an attempt to get around to as many parishes as he can and meet as many people as he can. When we asked what he does for fun and relaxation we discovered that he is a cyclist. He enjoys riding his bicycle on the trails around Omaha. With the weather the way it has been he said that he has spent a good deal of time riding his indoor bike, but the scenery isn't very intriguing.

We had a lovely dinner with plenty of conversation. Afterwards the Archbishop stood in front of the group and gave us a "State of the Union" assessment of the Diaconate in Northeast Nebraska as he sees it thus far. The Archbishop has been impressed by the deacons and their spouses that he has met in travels around the Archdiocese. He thanked us profusely for our ministry and selfless giving to the church. He indicated that in his mind we are

Eckley's knowledge and his love for history came through vividly in his presentation. He shared that Church history is our story, a story of God's love for man and how He is accomplishing His plan for us through time made visible to us as we look back upon recorded history. Fr. Eckley's introduction to history was filled with key dates, people, places and points of interest, he showed the Church in its grandeur and in its trials. Many in the class found it enlightening when Father emphasized his presentation by linking the past with the present, such as the development of our Liturgy and Sacraments. In his closing presentation during week six Father spent extra time going through the history of the Diaconate. Fr. Eckley will return next year for Church History part II, Reformation to present.

Father O'Donnell presented our second set of classes on Christian

brothers, clergy all; that our ministry, whether exercised in the background, or in the public eye, is essential to the Church's mission and he is grateful for all that we do.

The Archbishop was asked about his views on having one ordination ceremony for the Permanent Diaconate as opposed to separate ceremonies in each community. The Archbishop reminded us that we are ordained for the whole church and not just for our local parishes. He said that the possibility exists in the future for deacons to be assigned to parishes other than where they live. He indicated that this is one of many issues that the upcoming survey for the strategic planning effort will look into. The Archbishop indicated that it was his experience, in the Diocese of Springfield, that there was only one community and that all formation met on selected weekends throughout the year for formation. He

Spirituality. Fr. O'Donnell introduced this dynamic subject with a holistic approach covering many aspects, such as the nature of discipleship, man made in the image of God, Christian Spiritual History, the Saints and Mystics plus other topics that helped to reveal the subject. The pursuit of the spiritual life or "The Way" was of primary interest to the class. Purgation, Illumination, and Unification generated many questions. Father's presentation peeled back the veil and gave all a peek at the depth of our faith leaving all thirsty for more. A thirst that can only be quenched by spiritual growth and living in communion with the Holy Trinity, through our Lord Jesus Christ.



indicated that it seemed a little strange to him that we actually had two communities of diaconate formation with little interaction beyond the video conferencing of the classes. He expressed that it would be his desire to bring the two communities closer together; becoming one while recognizing and honoring those characteristics that are unique to each community.

You will recall that I expressed a similar desire in my first tenure as your Council President. This will be another aspect explored by the Strategic Planning sessions soon to be scheduled.

The Archbishop assured everyone that his assessment of the Diaconate in the Archdiocese is that it is a vibrant and vital part of the ministry of the Church in Northeast Nebraska. He will be making no wholesale changes in the program and sees no need to do so.

## Parish Information Regarding Future Deacon Formation Classes

If you would like to enter Deacon Formation in the fall of 2011 you must:

1. Get to know your Pastor
2. Get involved in Parish Ministry
3. Watch the Deacon website ([www.omahadeacon.org](http://www.omahadeacon.org)) and your Parish Bulletin for the "Inquiry" dates. Those are four evenings, once a month, starting in Jan. 2011 on the "Pillars of Formation."
4. Be aware of what is needed to apply and when to apply for entrance into the program.
5. It is too late to enter Formation in the Fall of 2010.

There are several things the Archbishop feels should be explored which could improve the community as a whole. As would be the case in any large organization, such as the Permanent Diaconate. He looks forward to seeing the results of our questionnaire and the direction of the strategic planning process. When your Area Representative contacts each of you for your views, please participate fully and be as frank and honest as you wish with your responses. We, the strategic planning committee, cannot change what we do not know is broken. Thank you all.

### ***The Deacon Council Needs You?***

We need an alternate representative for the southeast deanery  
We need to replace Alice & Marty Smith on the Spirituality Committee  
We need to replace Norma Bostwick as the women's representative  
We are working on the Communications Committee chairman replacement for Larry Sampier

Anyone interested should contact the incumbent.

# Third Saturday...October 17th, 2009...Spirituality Day

## “Catholic Spirituality of Service and Justice”

### Jennifer Reed-Bouley, Ph.D.

Dr. Reed-Bouley serves as Associate Professor in the Theology Program at the College of Saint Mary. She is a member of St. John’s Parish at Creighton University.

October’s third Saturday was an enlightening and enjoyable day, exploring the Catholic spirituality of service and justice. We focused on how we experience it in our daily lives, our parish life and our lives as global citizens. Dr. Reed-Bouley gave context to Catholic service and justice by sharing its development through history. Starting with RERUM NOVARUM (On Capital and Labor), the encyclical by Pope Leo XIII, up to Pope Benedict XVI’s CARITAS IN VERITATE (Charity in Truth), but spending most of her presentation within the USCCB (1993) document, “Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish.”

Our day started with an amazing look at how we are connected to the rest of the world. She used a simple economic exercise which had us look at all the items, clothes and personal belongings we came with, and capture the item’s country of origin. Well over twenty different countries from all over the world were represented by our search. The exercise showed how the bonds that connect us are real and tangible. Whether the bonds between us and the rest of the world are religious, spiritual, social, economic, or political connections the world is interconnected not isolated. This is at the heart of Catholic spirituality what we do affects others and what others do affects us.

The overriding principle that came through the day’s reflection is that all people are children of God, but not all people are treated with the dignity of being God’s children and that there is an associated responsibility to work towards righting the wrongs that deny people dignity. Dr. Reed-Bouley pointed out that the parish is the core place where the Church lives, so our parish setting is the most important place for us to share and act on our Catholic social teaching. The document “Communities of Salt and Light” provides a framework for the integration of our catholic social teaching into the rest of our parish life. Some highlights of this document are:

- **Anchoring Social Ministry-** Most important setting for the Church’s social ministry is prayer and worship
- **Sharing the Message-** Preaching that reflects the social dimensions of the Gospel is indispensable
- **Supporting the "Salt of the Earth" Family, Work, Citizenship-** Our parishes are clearly called to help people live their faith in the world, helping them to understand and act on the social dimensions of the Gospel in their everyday lives
- **Serving the "Least of These"-** Parishes are called to reach out to the hurting, the poor, and the vulnerable in our midst in concrete acts of charity
- **Advocating for Justice-** Parishes need to promote a revived sense of political responsibility calling Catholics to be informed and active citizens
- **Creating Community-** Many parishes are joining with other groups to rebuild a sense of community and organize for justice
- **Building Solidarity-** Parishes are called to be communities of solidarity

We finished up the day with small group discussion on what our parishes are doing here in Omaha for social outreach and then sharing those actions and programs with the larger group. All were left with a renewed challenge to advocate and work for Catholic social justice issues. *Submitted by Gary Bash*

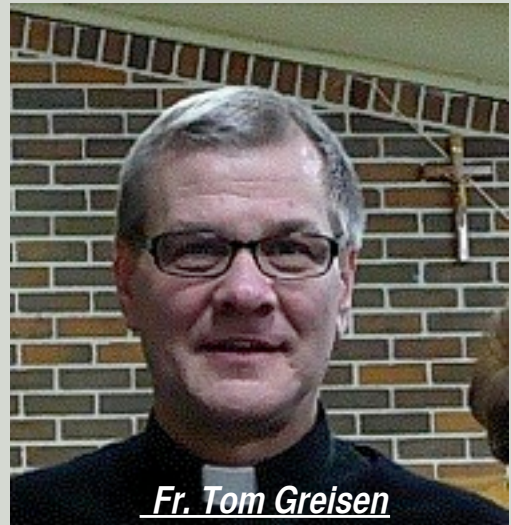
## Third Saturday...January 19th, 2010...Spirituality Day

Third Sat., 16-Jan.-10, had two gifted speakers at St. Rose, present "Growth in the Spiritual Life," to an enormous gathering of the Diaconate community. Sr. Marie Micheletto, RSM and Fr. Tom Griesen's polished presentation examined and amplified the tension we each live in between the God of our Faith and the God of our experience. Sr. Marie and Fr. Tom illustrated, using "Theological Reflection," a means we might use to integrate our faith with our lived experience of God working actively in our lives. A homily that works well is a perfect example of "Theological Reflection," blending faith and experience.

The scope of the day's journey was strikingly qualified, defined, by two quotes by Jean-Pierre de Caussade, found in his, "Abandonment to Divine Providence." Excerpts from those quotations: "Faith sees that Jesus Christ lives in everything and works through all history to the end of time, that every fraction of a second, every atom of matter, contains a fragment of his hidden life and his secret activity...There is never a moment when God does not come forward in the guise of some suffering or some duty, and all that takes place within us, around us and through us both includes and hides his activity...If we could lift the veil and if we watched with vigilant attention, God would endlessly reveal himself to us...We are really well taught only by the words which God addresses especially to us. Neither books nor laborious delving into history will instruct us about the wisdom of God...it is what happens moment by moment which enlightens us and gives us that practical

knowledge...knowledge that comes to us only through experience is absolutely necessary if we want to touch the hearts of those God sends to us. We can understand nothing perfectly except what experience has taught through what we have suffered and done." Using de Caussade's words as a backdrop Sr. Marie and Fr. Tom led each of us through an analysis, a theological reflection, of one of our own personal experiences and introduced us to a process, ARRR, which

may help us learn from that experience. Especially, if that experience had been painful, unhealthy. The acronym, ARRR, stands for Acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, impulses within the event. Relate to God about what you are acknowledging. Recieve from God how God views/understands the event: an affirmation, invitation, and/or challenge to you. Respond to God's affirmation, invitation, and/or challenge with a concrete action. Using ARRR in concert with Dr. Albert Ellis's "Ten Irrational Ideas" along with some suggested "spiritual implications" offered by Sr. Marie and Fr. Tom we saw, in practice, how we might be healed from a debilitating event from our past by "abandoning our irrational viewpoint and begin seeing from Christ's viewpoint."



Fr. Tom Griesen

The day concluded with a prayer of Blessing: "May the blessing of strength be with us; may the blessing of gentleness be on us; may the blessing of mercy be on us; may the blessing of wonder be on us; may the blessing of compassion be on us; may the blessing of simplicity be on us; may the blessing of patience be on us; may the blessing of peace be on us; may the blessing of joy be on us; and may the blessing of love and the blessing of friendship be on us. May the God of unity arise from within us, radiate around us and remain forever." Amen.

**Submitted by DD Staff Writer**

# Deacon Data Mar. '10

C/O Deacon Bud Simmonds  
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mail. Thank-You!

## Calendar of Selected Events

- March** 20...Third Saturday, 9:00am, St. Rose...(CE) "Reading and Teaching the Bible," Dr. Russell Reno
- April** 3...Deacon Council Meeting, 9:00am, St. Rose  
17...Third Saturday, 9:00am, Schuyler...(CE), "The Ministry of Permanent Deacons, As I See It," Archbishop George Lucas
- May** 1...Deacon Council Meeting, 9:00am, St. Rose  
15...Third Saturday, St. Rose...(Spiritual) "Nurturing Our Vocations," Fr. Paul Hoelsing
- June** 11-12-13...Men's Retreat, Scguyler
- July** 16-17-18...Women's Retreat, Schuyler
- August** 6-7-8...Couple's Retreat, Griswald, IA  
Anniversary Dinner, 6:00pm, German American Society

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