



Autumn 2008

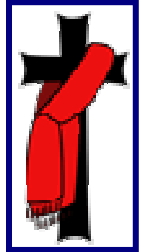
Southwark Diaconal Newsletter

Vol.3 No. 1

Welcome to a new year of Southwark Diocesan Diaconal News and Diocesan Diaconal OGF. We hope you enjoy both.

The Permanent Diaconate Team has decided that Southwark Diaconal Newsletter will now be electronic only. This will save expense and hopefully prove more efficient. There is a limited number of Deacons without e-mail and we shall endeavour to send them copies via neighbouring Deacons who have e-mail. Otherwise our print edition was previously used to circulate with the *Ad Clerum* to parishes, diocesan agencies and religious houses. Constructing an e-mail list for them is not easy and will leave many without a copy of the Newsletter but hopefully it will not be too long before the whole diocese can enter and embrace the electronic age. Anyone of you with expertise in this field would doubtless be performing a great service for the Church here in advancing the process!

Any items you want to submit or suggestions for content are as always welcome and should be sent to me: WJohngreenwood@aol.com



We're on the web!
www.rcsouthwark.co.uk

From Pope Benedict XVI's address to clergy and consecrated persons during vespers at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris on Friday 12th September 2008:

“And you, dear deacons, effective co-workers of the bishops and priests, continue to love the word of God! You proclaim the Gospel at the heart of the Eucharistic celebration, and you expound it in the catechesis you offer to your brothers and sisters. Make the Gospel the centre of your lives, of your service to your neighbours, of your entire *diakonia*. Without seeming to take the place of priests, but assisting them with your friendship and your activity, may you be living witnesses to the infinite power of God's word!”

Dates for your Diary!

Diocesan Diaconal Days

March 2009

Saturday 7th March 2009, 10 am:
The Sacred Heart Church,
West Street,
Sittingbourne.

May 2009

Saturday 2nd May 2009, 10 am:
Saint Joseph, New Malden with
**Renewal of Commitment to
Diaconal Service at 2.30pm.**

On-going Formation (OGF)

The On-Going Formation Programme for 2008-09 began on 18th October at Sidcup. We shall concentrate in this year (Lectionary Year B) on the sacramental ministry of deacons. Canon John Redford of Maryvale kicked off for us at Sidcup on the Eucharistic Words of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and on John Chapter 6, the Bread of Life Discourse.

Last year's programme concluded at the Holy Ghost Fathers' house in Bickley and was led by Bishop Pat Lynch. A brief Summery is on page 2.

Renewal of Commitment to Diaconal Service

This will be on Saturday 2nd May 2009, the Saturday nearest to the date of Archbishop Kevin's Episcopal ordination. As the Amigo Hall will still be unavailable it has been decided to move the Renewal Mass to Saint Joseph Church, New Malden. It will be at 2.30 pm in order to assist those travelling from distant parts of the diocese and will take place during one of the regular Diocesan Diaconal Days. Deacons and wives may attend either the full Day for the usual fees or simply the Renewal Mass with refreshments afterwards. During the Mass ministries will also be conferred on students in formation. Please make a careful note in your diaries of this important day for Deacons in the Diocese.

Bickley DDD with Bishop Pat Lynch, Saturday 3rd May, 2008.

After opening with prayer Bishop Pat directed us in some *lectio divina* using Acts 6:1-7, the calling of The Seven. Then, in the morning he took us through "five principles of diaconal ministry", to be used not as "the theology" of diaconal ministry but as "signposts". He noted that the events in Acts took place at a time of profound social changes. Things were also changing in the early Church and there was a need to adapt both to circumstances and to places. Athens, Antioch and Rome these were all very different places. Change is also the reality today. What is our reaction? Very often it is resistance.

The Five Principles were:

Diaconal ministry is Trinitarian. Communion and Mission are key terms and are interlinked. The discernment of the Seven was communal and their role missionary, both aspects being rooted in the communion and the mission of the Trinity.

Diaconal ministry is Christological and Baptismal. Yves Congar during and after the Vatican Council developed our understanding of Christ and the Christian as Priestly, Prophetic and Kingly and this understanding is still developing. For example "kingly" might mean governing the Church but in service.

Diaconal ministry is an integral part of the ministry of Sacred Orders which includes bishops, priests and deacons. An insight of Vatican II was of episcopacy as the fullness of Orders. So both priests and deacons should be seen in relation to bishops. The communion of bishops among themselves and with their priests is well understood and established, but what of the deacons? And the religious orders?

Diaconal ministry is a pastoral ministry.

Diaconal ministry, like all ministry, is contextual. Until now the usual context for deacons has been the Parish.

The afternoon discussions dealt with some of the challenges facing the diaconate today in our diocese and particularly our deaneries. Among the most important of these were

- getting people, especially young people, involved,
- how to proclaim the Word,
- mobility, the transitory nature of so much of the Parish population,
- prejudice,
- lack of spirituality,
- communication,
- peoples' lack of self-understanding.

It is necessary to engage with people where they are and this may not be in the Parish context. It could be a place of work, school or university, or the home. Chaplaincies and the right kinds of chaplains are needed. Visiting homes is now very difficult and there is seldom a "domestic church" but ministry to the family is very important. There is a lack of faith experience, ethos and teachers in Catholic secondary schools. Things are shaping the values of young people at an early age and away from Church teaching.

Building community means engaging the silent majority. It means public witness through perhaps Deanery-based Missions and Forty Hours Devotions. Deacons can be people to sow seeds of all this in the deaneries.

Pope Benedict on the Ministry of Deacons



Part II

“I think that one characteristic of the ministry of the deacons is precisely the multiplicity of the diaconate’s applications. In the International Theological Commission, a few years ago, we studied at length the diaconate in the history and also the present of the Church. And we discovered that there is not just one profile. What they should do varies, depending on the preparation of the persons and the situations in which they find themselves. There can be applications and activities that are very different, always in communion with the bishop and the parish, naturally. In the various situations, various possibilities arise, also depending on the professional preparation that these deacons could have. They could be committed in the cultural sector, which is so important today, or they could have a voice and an important post in the educational realm. We are thinking this year precisely of the problem of education as central to our future, and the future of humanity.

Certainly the sector of charity was in Rome the original sector, because those called presbyters

and deacons were centres of Christian charity. This was from the beginning in the city of Rome, a fundamental area. In my encyclical ‘Deus Caritas Est’, I showed that not just preaching and the liturgy are essential for the Church and for the ministry of the Church, but rather equally important is the service of caritas - in its multiple dimensions - for the poor, the needy.

Thus, I hope that all the time, in the whole diocese, even in distinct situations, this continues being a fundamental dimension, and also a priority for the commitment of the deacons, even if not the only one, as is also shown in the early Church, where the seven deacons were chosen precisely to permit the apostles to dedicate themselves to prayer, liturgy and preaching. Also afterward, Stephen found himself in the situation of having to preach to the Greeks, to the Jews who spoke Greek, and thus the field of preaching was amplified. He is conditioned, we could say, by the cultural situation, where he has a voice to make present in that sector the word of God. In that way he makes more possible the universality of the Christian testimony, opening the doors to Saint Paul who witnessed his stoning, and later, in a certain sense, was his successor in the universalisation of the word of God.”

The Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Southwark

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New!

A website for the permanent diaconate in England and Wales –

<http://www.diaconate.org.uk>

The website is public and contains information that may be useful to someone discerning a vocation to the permanent diaconate, students in formation or ordained deacons.

Retreats:

May 2009: Friday 8th May to Sunday 10th May 2009:

Diocesan Diaconal Retreat (deacons and wives) at Maison d'Accueil, Merville, France. *Booking now.*

September 2009: Friday 11th September to Sunday 13th September 2009:

Diocesan Diaconal Retreat (deacons only) at The Friars, Aylesford.

International Conference

International Diaconal Study Conference: Thursday 26th March to Sunday 29th March 2009: Vienna.

For details please contact Roger Evans; evansrf@btinternet.com

Please Pray for:

Our students in formation for the Permanent Diaconate:

James Bruce-Quansah, Mathew Manoharan and Jolyon Vickers (first year),

Felim McCarthy and Errol Quagraine (second year),

Javier Elderfield, John-Simon Lawson, John Tuggy and Peter Rennie (third year).

Our aspirants for the Permanent Diaconate – Jim Coleman, Jim Durkan, Alfred Banya, Graham Price and Christopher Richardson. Their wives and families.

Please also remember Gerry Buckels who was bereaved recently, for the repose of the soul of his wife Lynne and all deacons and wives who are sick.