

Called to serve
Six candidates to be ordained permanent deacons, page 3.



Reaching out



Nearly 1,000 take part in Cathedral Prep, Villa Outreach Day, page 4.

www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

May 16, 2010

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Bernadine of Siena



St. Philip Neri

- May 18 St. John I
- May 20 St. Bernadine of Siena
- May 21 St. Christopher Magallanes and his companions
- May 22 St. Rita of Cascia
- May 23 Pentecost
- May 25 St. Bede the Venerable, St. Gregory VII, St. Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi
- May 26 St. Philip Neri
- May 27 St. Augustine of Canterbury
- May 30 Most Holy Trinity

Confirmations

St. Stephen, Oil City – Saturday, May 15 at 10 a.m. Confirmation classes include Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Oil City; Our Lady Help of Christians, Oil City; St. Joseph, Oil City; St. Stephen, Oil City; and St. Venantius, Rouseville.

Immaculate Conception, Clarion – Saturday, May 15 at 5:30 p.m.

All Saints, Waterford – Monday, May 17 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include All Saints, Waterford, and St. Francis Xavier, McKean.

Mount Carmel, Erie – Thursday, May 20 at 7 p.m.

St. John the Evangelist, Girard – Saturday, May 22 at 10 a.m.

St. Peter Cathedral, Erie – Saturday, May 22 at 5:15 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Peter Cathedral, Erie, and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mercer.

St. Stanislaus, Erie – Monday, May 24 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include Holy Rosary, Erie; Holy Trinity, Erie; Our Mother of Sorrows, Erie; St. John the Baptist, Erie; St. Patrick, Erie; and St. Stanislaus, Erie.

St. Luke, Erie – Tuesday, May 25 at 7 p.m.

Clergy appointments

The Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL, Bishop of Erie, announces the following clergy appointments:



Father Thomas Aleksa, appointed senior associate of St. Luke Parish, Erie. Effective April 19, 2010.

Father Timothy Balliett, appointed weekend assistant at St. Patrick Parish, Franklin, while continuing as a faculty member of Kennedy Catholic High School, Hermitage, and residency at St. Joseph Parish, Sharon. Effective April 21, 2010.

Father John Murphy, appointed chaplain of Hamot Medical Center, Erie, while continuing as administrator of Mount Calvary Parish, Erie. Effective April 21, 2010.

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Dropping the bomb on war

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton makes the case for abolishing war

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE – Bishop Thomas Gumbleton is hopeful that people will say no to war.

"I think we have a climate, especially among our young people, where there is a strong concern for the planet," he said. "I think there is fertile ground that, through our churches and educational institutions, we could build up a climate against war."

Bishop Gumbleton, a retired auxiliary from the Archdiocese of Detroit and a longtime voice for peace,

non-violence and the abolition of nuclear weapons, gave a lecture May 6 at the Villa Maria campus lecture hall in Erie.

"But we can't let the atrocities of war be forgotten," he said.

Panels of photos, graphics and statistics showing the damage caused by the A-bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 were on display in the lecture hall's lobby. The display, sponsored by Veterans for Peace, graphically described and illustrated the injuries and after effects of survivors including blast injuries, burns due to heat rays and

fire, cancer, radiation poisoning and the abnormal growth of scar tissue.

Bishop Gumbleton discussed START II (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) which was signed in Prague by President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on April 10. It replaces the original treaty which expired in December.

The new treaty calls for the U.S. to reduce its nuclear weapons from approximately 2,200 to 1,550 and for Russia to reduce in a comparable way, Bishop Gumbleton said. "It seems that this should



Bishop Thomas Gumbleton addresses an audience May 6 at Villa Maria's campus lecture hall in Erie. Bishop Gumbleton lectured on U.S. nuclear disarmament policy and why war should be abolished.

be hopeful," he said. "And yet I must tell you, first of all there's no guarantee that the treaty will be ratified by the Russian legislature or the U.S. Senate."

He said that 40 U.S. senators have already written to the president demanding that he obtain further concessions before they will ratify the new treaty.

"Even if it is ratified and becomes the law, it does not do very much to rid our world of nuclear weapons," Bishop Gumbleton said. "Yes, we would reduce our numbers. But part of that is not even true because part of the reduction is only a reduction in the way we count the weapons."

As an example, he said a submarine that has three or more trident missiles armed with nuclear warheads would be counted as one weapon.

The budget submitted to Congress also seems to be hopeful, he said. "And yet I must tell you, first of all there's no guarantee that the treaty will be ratified by the Russian legislature or the U.S. Senate."

See GUMBLETON, page 2

Learning about their gifts

Diocese sponsors Stewardship Days for kids

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Catholic school students throughout the diocese recently found out more about the gifts God has given them and how they can share those gifts with others.

During the 2009-10 school year, more than 500 5th and 6th graders and 60 high school students took part in a series of Stewardship Days for kids. Originally started as a pilot program in 2008, the series was opened up to any school interested in participating. A total of 10 schools chose to participate.

"We're teaching good, Christian stewardship," said Joseph Hoag, director of the diocesan Office of Stewardship and Annual Appeals, which sponsored the events. "There's no better starting point than to try and teach that to children. There's no better starting conversation than talking with them about their own gifts."

Prior to the Stewardship Days, students utilized Gallup's Strengths Explorer program to find out their top three strengths. Teachers also conducted strengths-finding lessons in advance of the day.

Area high school students were also involved. They completed Gallup's adult version of the program, Strengths Finder. After receiving a list of their top five strengths, they were trained as facilitators of the program and led the activities for the Stewardship Days.

The Strengths Finder assessment is utilized by a number of Fortune 500 companies to help maximize employees' strengths.

Three Stewardship Days were held in the diocese:

- Dec. 17 at St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie – Schools participating included Our Lady of Peace, St. Luke and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Erie.
- Jan. 20 at St. Mark Catholic Center –



Schools participating included St. James, St. Peter Cathedral and Villa Maria Elementary, Erie.

High school students from Cathedral Prep, Mercyhurst Prep and Villa Maria Academy facilitated these days.

■ April 21 at St. Tobias, Brockway – Schools participating included St. Leo, Ridgway, St. Marys Catholic Elementary and Middle schools, St. Marys; and St. Boniface, Kersey.

High school students from Elk County Catholic High School in St. Marys served as facilitators.

Mary Detwiler, principal of St. Leo School, said students went online to find out how persuasive, competitive and outgoing they were, recognizing a number of attributes.

"It was a chance for them to learn and think about what their gifts are from God and to recognize the gifts and talents of others, too," Detwiler said.

She added that she received good feedback from parents, as well.

"Parents were saying it made them stop and recognize what their kids are good at," she said.

Damon Finazzo, principal of Villa Maria Elementary, said students not only learned about their strengths but also about why they're good at certain things.

"The other piece to it was that they realized how important it is to work with one another and recognize and utilize each other's gifts," Finazzo said.

St. John, Holy Rosary to share a pastor

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE – St. John the Baptist and Holy Rosary parishes in Erie will now be under the guidance of one pastor.

The announcement was made by Bishop Donald Trautman in the form of a letter to parishioners and was read at all Masses the weekend of May 8-9.

Father John Jacquet, pastor of St. John the Baptist, will also become pastor of Holy Rosary and reside at Holy Rosary's rectory, effective June 29. Father Joseph Czarkowski will continue to serve as the pastor of Holy Rosary until that time.

"Sorrowfully but given present realities, I am writing to share with you the need to reconfigure the pastoral care of your two parishes," Bishop Trautman said in the letter.

After meeting with both pastors several times and listening to members of the diocesan priests' personnel board, Bishop Trautman cited several items that led to the decision. They include:

■ A noticeable and steady decline in parish membership in both parishes in recent years, one reason being the demographic shift of people from the inner-city to the suburbs. St. John currently has 462 registered families, and Holy Rosary has 625 registered families.

■ The current priest shortage – Currently there are 141 diocesan and religious order priests staffing 122 parishes and 19 mission churches in the Erie Diocese's 13 counties. In the past 20 years, 39 priests have been ordained for the diocese while 93 have died in the same time period.

■ The financial challenges presented by the declining membership.

Bishop Trautman also announced that St. John-Holy Rosary Eastside Catholic School will remain open.

"For as long as we can and as best we can, we need to continue our outreach to God's holy people," the bishop said. "St. John-Holy Rosary School excels in this regard."

Both parishes will remain separate canonical entities with separate pastoral and financial councils and book-keeping.

One change as a result of the reconfiguration will be the need to adopt a new Mass schedule to accommodate one pastor, he said. Father Jacquet will work with the pastoral councils of both parishes in arranging a new schedule.



Father John Jacquet

Teens meet for faith, fellowship during Hope & Power

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

The Hope & Power tour wrapped up its 13-month run April 11 at St. Tobias Parish in Brockway.

Young people from Brookville, Clarion, DuBois, Erie and St. Marys joined Father Joseph Campbell and the Hope & Power team to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday with drama, music, witness, reconciliation and Mass.

It was the culmination of a year-long tour sponsored by the Erie Diocese's Youth and Young Adult Ministry, which began in April 2009 and hit all areas of northwestern Pennsylvania. Hope & Power replaced the diocesan senior high youth rally for 2009-10.

Total attendance for the tour was approximately 1,000 youth, parents and leaders, with the number of confessions heard about the same. Tour stops included Grove City, Titusville, St. Marys, West Middlesex, French-



Hope & Power gave youth and young adults the opportunity for sharing faith and fellowship.

town, Clearfield, Albion, Brockway and several in Erie. "We were able to speak to a lot of kids who had never before attended a youth ministry event," said Father Steve Schreiber, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the diocese. "It's incredibly fun to see the tour T-shirts showing up at different events and places."

Guest speakers at each site

presented the Gospel message in different ways and styles. The new voices helped bring a groupie element to the tour, with many youth attending multiple tour stops throughout the diocese.

"Every stop changed a bit. It was nice to hear different speakers," said Jerry Stumpf, a junior at Greenville High School and member of St. Michael Parish in

Greenville.

Stumpf attended eight of the 12 Hope & Power events.

"What I like about it was it was two hours, which is not too long but not too short," he said. "I like that there was confession because I could go monthly."

Stumpf added that he enjoyed that attendance grew at each event.

Each guest speaker was followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a confession talk including an examination of conscience. Students then had the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

Msgr. John Hagerty, who heard confessions at four tour stops, said Hope & Power was an opportunity for teenagers who may not have gotten the sacrament otherwise.

"When they come as a group, I think there's more serious attention given to the sacrament than there would be if they were alone. Sometimes that retreat experience

can be more meaningful," Msgr. Hagerty said.

He said that young people are eager to respond to the questions of the heart.

"You don't know which life will truly be touched at that moment of grace," he said.

"Teens from St. Lawrence Parish in Albion attended Hope & Power in Erie before hosting their own tour stop in March. They performed a drama that pitted society's myths against God's truths.

"Our confirmation students were just coming off of a TEC (To Encounter Christ) retreat, and this really furthered their experience," said Kathleen Peterson, youth minister at St. Lawrence. "For some of the high school kids, this was their first time at a diocesan youth ministry event."

After some students initially didn't want to attend, Peterson said she's since seen them come to other youth events.

View a Hope & Power slide-show at www.ontvline.us.



IN THE U.S.

■ **The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced April 30 that the Vatican has given its "recognition," or confirmation, of the new English translation of the Roman Missal, but said the exact date for its implementation in U.S. parishes remains to be determined.** The approval came in a letter dated March 25 from Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, prefect for the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, although the missal is still undergoing final editing by Vatican officials, the USCCB announcement said. The Vatican also approved a series of adaptations and proper texts for use in the United States. Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, USCCB president, received the decrees personally while he was in Rome for meetings of the Vox Clara Committee, an international group of bishops who advise the divine worship congregation about English liturgical translations.



■ **Catholic leaders and universities should "come out of the shadows" and take a significant role in educating those who are ambivalent or undecided about the issue of comprehensive immigration reform,** according to Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles. "We are an immigrant church ourselves since the founding days of the republic," the cardinal said in a May 3 presentation at Jesuit-run Fordham University in New York. "The immigrant experience is our own," he added. "We should be front and center in leading the charge for immigration reform not only because it is a matter of justice, but also because it is part of our identity as a church." Cardinal Mahony said Christ himself "was an itinerant preacher with no place to lay his head" and "a refugee who fled the terror of Herod. When we welcome the newcomer, we welcome him.

We need to do more to ensure that we do not become a nation that treats those who look foreign as suspect and to be investigated, even arrested, merely on the basis of their appearance."



Protesters join in prayer May 1 during a demonstration against Arizona's tough new immigration law outside the state Capitol in Phoenix. Demonstrators at rallies across the nation criticized the law, which makes it a state crime to be in the United States illegally.

AROUND THE WORLD

■ **Pope Benedict XVI will name a personal delegate with authority over the Legionaries of Christ and a commission to study its constitutions, the first steps toward a profound reform of the order,** the Vatican said. In a lengthy statement May 1, the Vatican indicated that the Legionaries would need to undergo very deep changes, including a redefinition of the order's religious charism and a revision of the way authority is exercised among its members. While the pope will have the final word on whatever changes are eventually imposed, one Vatican source said after seeing the statement: "It looks like they are calling for a re-foundation of the order." The Vatican statement castigated the Legionaries' founder, the late Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, who had been found to have fathered children and sexually abused seminarians. His "most grave and objectively immoral conduct" calls for "a path of profound revision" in the order, the Vatican statement said.

■ **The Shroud of Turin is an icon of "the most radical solidarity": Christ sharing the loneliest moment of human existence by lying in a tomb,** Pope Benedict XVI said after he knelt in silent prayer before the linen cloth. The pope did not discuss the authenticity of the shroud as the cloth used to wrap the dead body of Jesus, but he said it clearly "is a burial cloth that wrapped the body of a man who was crucified in a way corresponding completely to what the Gospels tell us of Jesus." Pope Benedict paid a daylong visit to Turin May 2, celebrating an outdoor Mass, venerating the shroud in Turin's cathedral, meeting with young people and visiting the sick. The shroud is on public display until May 23.



Pope Benedict XVI prays in front of the Shroud of Turin in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin, Italy, May 2.

■ **Pope Benedict XVI is planning to create a Roman Curia department charged with overseeing the "re-evangelization" of traditionally Christian countries,** an Italian newspaper reported. The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization will be announced in an apostolic letter being prepared by the pope and will be headed by Italian Archbishop Rino Fisichella, *Il Giornale* said April 25. The Vatican had no immediate comment on the report. The step would represent the first major Roman Curia innovation under Pope Benedict, who has frequently spoken about the need to renew the roots of the faith in European and other Western societies.

By the Way...

The 33rd annual Clearfield Rosary March held May 2 (see story on page 4) was not an easy one for the Moore family. Earlier in the week, Edgar "Bud" Moore, the founder of the event, passed away at the age of 91. With heaviness in their hearts, the family worked together to make sure the event went on as planned.



Jason Koshinski

Bill Moore opened this year's service by talking about his father. When he planned the first march years ago, his children asked him what they would do if no one showed up. "He said then it will just be us having the rosary march," Bill said. He explained that his father had a peaceful death, surrounded by members of the family and praying the rosary.

We offer our condolences to Father Matthew Ruyechan, pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Oil City and parochial administrator of St. Venantius Parish in Rouseville, on the death of his mother, Mary Ruyechan, who passed away May 2.

St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Emlenton has been selected for the 2010 Oil Heritage Region Historic Preservation Award. The award, which recognizes the parish's recent restoration efforts, will be presented on Monday, May 24 at Perry Street Station in Titusville at 7 p.m.

The award is sponsored by the Crawford County Historical Society, Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism, Titusville Historical Society, Titusville Renaissance Inc. and the Venango County Historical Society.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of service in the Diocese of Erie for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The community was originally founded in LePuy, France, in 1650. In 1836, the sisters came to the United States and eventually found their way to Northwestern Pennsylvania in 1860. Since then, the Sisters of St. Joseph have ministered in the 13 counties of the diocese and beyond.

The sisters will celebrate with a Mass on Sunday, May 23 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie at 1:30 p.m. with Bishop Donald Trautman presiding.

They're also planning a number of events at various locations around the diocese throughout the year, reconnecting with many friends and supporters.

Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at JKoshinski@ErieRCD.org or 814.824.1171.

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton makes the case for abolishing war

GUMBLETON, from page 1

dictory, he said. The budget request for nuclear bomb activities for next year is \$7 billion, which is a 14 percent increase from last year's budget for the same programs, he said.

"I'm determined to try to convince you that focusing our energies on START is not enough," Bishop Gumbleton said. "What we must do is we must say no to war. This sounds to many people as something unthinkable, that we could absolutely abolish war."

He quoted Pope John Paul II's words in 1991 after the Persian Gulf War when he said, "Never again war. No, never again war."

Those were the same words Pope Paul VI used when addressing the United Nations in 1965.

"I hope we all will try to be convinced that these reasons why we say no to war are compelling reasons," Bishop Gumbleton said.

■ It destroys the lives of innocent people.

■ It throws into upheaval the lives of those who do the killing.

■ It leaves behind a trail of hatred and resentment that makes it all the more difficult to resolve the problems that provoked the war.

He noted that World War II was the first war to have more civilian casualties than soldiers.

"And it's been like that with every war since," he said.

He said the lives of the Iraqi people have been in upheaval since its infrastructure and irrigation systems were destroyed in the Persian Gulf War.

After the war, he said the U.S. imposed an embargo on Iraq for 12-and-a-half years. The U.N. did a study indicating that at least 1.5 million people died because of those sanctions during that period, he added.

"That's what war does when it's waged against people, when it's total war," he said. "The suffering of the people is almost beyond comprehension."

The visit and lecture were well timed. Participants are gathering in New York May 3-28 at the UN Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the end of his weekly general audience May 5, Pope Benedict XVI made his own appeal, asking world leaders to work calmly and seriously to control the spread of nuclear weapons "in the prospect of their complete elimination from the planet."

The event was sponsored by the Erie Benedictines for Peace and co-sponsored by a number of organizations.

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Briefly

Dana in concert in DuBois

DUBOIS – Dana, an international recording artist and one of Ireland's most successful entertainers, will perform at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in DuBois on Wednesday, May 19 at 7 p.m.

Dana has shared the stage with Julio Iglesias and Placido Domingo and inspired the youth of the world with her performances at World Youth Day events. She is the writer of the 1993 World Youth Day song "We Are One Body." She also composed "Totus Tuus," inspired by the motto of Pope John Paul II.

Tickets are \$5. Order by calling 814-371-5773 Ext. 1, 2 or 6.

This event is sponsored by St. Michael the Archangel Parish and the Ancient Order of Hibernians.



Dana

'Lord of the Flies' at Cathedral Prep

ERIE – Cathedral Prep High School in Erie is bringing back an old tradition at the school, that of the senior class play. This year, the school is producing William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" adapted for the stage by Nigel Williams. The show includes a cast of 13 seniors, with at least 13 additional seniors behind the scenes. With vivid costumes and sets, the play addresses issues that teens deal with (peer pressure, violence, bullying, discernment of right from wrong).

It will be presented at the H. David Boves Auditorium at Cathedral Prep, 225 W. Ninth St. in Erie, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, May 20, 21 and 22, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens. Tickets will be available at the door.



Collection for International Needs

The annual Collection for International Needs will be taken up in the Erie Diocese the weekend of May 22-23. It is actually a combination of three national collections:

- It provides aid to Catholics in the church in Central and Eastern Europe to help build churches, train and educate seminarians, clergy and lay leaders, publish Catholic newspapers, support orphanages and support evangelization among children, youth and adults.

- It helps all people regardless of race, creed or nation, through Catholic Relief Services by providing for the victims of war and natural disasters, aiding the church suffering under persecution, alleviating poverty and educating the poor.

- It provides needed assistance to the church in Africa, a rapidly growing and vibrant church which is rich in vitality but poor in resources.

Rosaries for military personnel

The Erie Apostolate of Divine Mercy has homemade rosaries available for all military personnel. This particular rosary is longer than most rosaries because it is designed to be worn over the head.

For more information, write to the Erie Apostolate of Divine Mercy at P.O. Box 6305, Erie, PA 16512-6305.

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Six candidates to be ordained permanent deacons

On Friday, May 21, Bishop Donald Trautman will ordain six men to the permanent diaconate during a 7 p.m. Mass at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

For the past five years, these men have participated in a program of academic, spiritual and pastoral formation. Meet the deacon candidates:

Richard Brogdon

Age: 60
Hometown: Grew up in McKean; now lives in Erie
Parish: St. Jude the Apostle, Erie
Family: Wife, Victoria, three children and 10 grandchildren



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse:

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can this kind of faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear or has no food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:14-17)

Ministries and service organizations: Lector, eucharistic minister, parish council, liturgy committee, Marriage Encounter, hospital ministry, First Friday Communion services and minister at West Lake Woods, Hospice of North East, refugee program. Out of my experience at the chaplain's office at St. Vincent Hospital and with the suggestion of Father Tom Brooks, we started a beloved hospital ministry at St. Jude.

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? The seed of becoming a deacon came from a suggestion of Dave Pratt, another deacon at St. Jude. It grew silently into a yearning strong enough that I talked to our pastor (then Msgr. Robert Brugger) about how I could serve the church and our parish even more. I felt then and throughout these four years of discernment that God was shining his light on me, helping me to grow closer to him and to his people.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? I want to become the hands of Jesus, applying my talents and skills to serve the poor, the ill, the hungry, the widow, the refugee, the needy in our world, helping to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Fred Keck

Age: 58
Hometown: Erie
Parish: Holy Rosary, Erie
Family: None in this state, unless you count my brothers and sisters in Christ at Holy Rosary.



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse:

"God became human so that humans could become divine." - one of the church fathers

"I came that they might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

Prayer of St. Francis

Ministries and service organizations: RCIA, adult faith formation, hospital visitation, regular columnist for *Faith* magazine.

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? I believe God called me to the permanent diaconate. God may have had purposes in mind of which I am unaware. But God may also share some of the reasons I have for wanting to be a permanent deacon: To put my theological education and gifts to work for God's people; to give me the fulfillment of being of service and to make a difference in the church; to give God's people in Erie another minister to care for their needs and help them take up their own callings.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? Many things are exciting prospects for me. Giving a homily regularly is one. I really enjoy preparing and presenting them. And sometimes people even tell me that something I said made a difference. That is always a great gift to me.

Along the same lines, I expect to do some teaching and counseling. Again, the opportunity is there to help people grow. In order to grow, a person has to change. But most of us find it difficult to change. Such reluctance is a normal and necessary safety mechanism built into our make up. But it can also hold us back. I think I may be able to help people with that.

Doug Konzel

Age: 55
Hometown: Erie
Parish: St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community, Erie
Family: Wife, Cheryl; children, Jason, Christopher, Stephanie, Gregory; five grandchildren.



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse:

"For though the fig tree blossom not nor fruit be on the vines, though the yield of the olive fail and the terraces produce no nourishment, though the flocks disappear from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord and exult in my saving God. God, my Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet swift as those of hinds and enables me to go upon the heights. For the leader; with stringed instruments." (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Ministries and service organizations: Pastoral council, choir, cantor, lector, sacristan, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, liturgy committee, evangelization committee, hour coordinator for perpetual adoration, committed adorer, building committee, 7th & 8th grade religious education, Oktoberfest/car raffle committee.

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? Msgr. William Biebel was the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit called me. I will never forget that night as long as I live.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? Teaching others the fantastic truths of our Catholic faith; helping others to foster a real, mature and, life-long relationship with Christ; the opportunity to move on to the next stage in God's plan for me. I love surprises.

Dick O'Polka

Age: 59
Hometown: Franklin
Parish: St. Patrick, Franklin
Family: Wife, Tammy; children, Richard, Robert and Lyndsey



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse:

The second section of Psalm 19 tells us Scripture is perfect, sure and trustworthy; right, pure, clear and true. Reading Scripture converts the soul, gives wisdom to the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eye. Scripture endures forever and it is true and righteous. Psalm 19 also tells us that our obedience to the Word of God brings great reward. So, I would say, right now, Psalm 19 is my favorite part of Scripture. That, along with, "You did not call me, I called you."

Ministries and service organizations: Pre-Cana, religious education and confirmation class, parish finance council, Venango Catholic High School finance committee, parish council, Polk Center chapel, St. Elizabeth Center in Oil City, lector and Eucharistic minister.

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? I had a desire to serve in a more meaningful way. I cannot recall an event or happening in my life that pointed me in this direction. I felt a tugging by God to investigate the permanent diaconate about seven years ago and it took more than two years to realize that it was indeed God calling me to serve the church.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? I look forward to being part of the liturgy and tradition of the church, but more importantly, I wish to aid in channeling the gifts of the Holy Spirit (both my gifts and others' gifts) into a stream of living water that will aid others in finding love in Jesus and their neighbor. I also wish to assist in advancing the sacred teachings of the church and to aid the church in meeting its obligations set forth in "*Gaudium et Spes*."

Rick Rueberger

Age: 45
Hometown: Sharon
Parish: St. Anthony of Padua, Sharon
Family: Wife, Linda; children, Anna, Mark, Rebecca and Luke.



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse:

"Be not afraid!" - Pope John Paul II
"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Ministries and service organizations: Parish hospital and nursing home visits, First Friday homebound visits, parish council, Prince of Peace Center volunteer, member of 684 Sharon Council Knights of Columbus (3rd degree).

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? I've always believed that God was calling me to some special type of service since a young child. As an adolescent and adult, I was always involved with service to my parish as an altar boy, helping around the parish, school or cemetery or visiting the sick. As our children grew older and after much discernment, it only seemed natural to apply and participate in the diaconate program. Being in this program has galvanized my belief that the Lord is calling me to become a permanent deacon. This experience has been a great blessing to my family and has helped in increasing all of our faith and love for the Catholic Church.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? To continue to serve my parish and ministries; representing the Erie Diocese and the universal church. I also look forward to being able serve at the altar in a more unique way.

Dennis Socash

Age: 53
Hometown: Winburne
Parish: Ss. Peter & Paul, Hawk Run (Central Moshannon Catholic Communities)
Family: Wife, CarolAnne; children, Michelle, Brian and Jonathan; five grandchildren



Inspiring quote, prayer or Scripture verse: "I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me." (Philippians 4:13) This is a reminder for me that even at times when I doubt myself, God is still there to help me to achieve and to fulfill his will in me and through me.

Ministries and service organizations: Lector, Eucharistic minister, religious education teacher, past Grand Knight, Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, extended member of the Anawim Community in Frenchville.

What attracted or called you to the permanent diaconate? My initial exposure to the diaconate was when I attended the ordination of a friend of mine who is now a deacon. I got an informational pamphlet about the permanent diaconate from the diocese and discerned about whether or not to apply for candidacy to the program for two years prior to applying. I have been involved in different ministries in my parish and have been in the role of service in my community and my church in one capacity or another for the majority of my life.

What do you look forward to in becoming a deacon? I want to continue to serve the church and my community in whatever way God chooses to use me in order to make Christ's presence more real to his people.

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Mercyhurst Prep students finish first, second in pro-life oratory contest

ERIE - Mercyhurst Preparatory School junior Andy Pregler (left) garnered a 1st place finish in the 11th and 12th grade competition in the People for Life Pro-Life Oratory contest for the Erie area. Freshman Caitlin Smith came in second for 9th and 10th graders. The 2010 regional high school oratory contest, sponsored by People for Life, was expanded this year to include two levels of competition: one for grades 9-10 and another for grades 11-12. In past years the contest was only open to grades 11-12. All high school students living in Erie, Crawford, Venango and Mercer counties were eligible. The contest was held in Erie on April 17 at People for Life's



main office, 1625 W. 26th St. Contestants prepared and delivered an original five- to seven-minute pro-life talk about abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or embryo-destructive stem cell research. Pregler delivered a talk on abor-

tion and adoption, and Smith discussed abortion as a hurtful choice. As a first-place winner, Pregler received \$100 and the opportunity to compete in the statewide contest in Harrisburg April 25.

Venango Catholic cleans up county during outreach day

OIL CITY - Members of the student body and faculty at Venango Catholic High School joined in Oil City's spring cleanup day April 29 by volunteering their time and energy to help local residents and areas of Venango County. The day was designated as VCHS Outreach Day.



National Honor Society students took part in the annual highway cleanup by cleaning a two-mile stretch on Route 62. Freshmen and sophomores cleaned the areas around Justus Park, McDonald's and City Hall. Juniors and seniors worked in groups of two, three or four with a designated faculty member and

helped a local senior citizen with house or yard work. Pictured are VCHS juniors Ryan McMahon, Emilee Janidlo and Adri Mason doing yard work at a house in Oil City.

Clearfield holds 33rd annual rosary march

CLEARFIELD - Even under cloudy skies, more than 550 people attended the 33rd annual Clearfield Rosary March May 2. Father David Poulson, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Fryburg, led the rosary. At the beginning of the procession was the Knights of Columbus Pope John Paul II 952 Assembly with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. Ending the procession of the faithful were more members of the Knights of Columbus escorting Father Joseph Campbell of St. Leo Magnus Parish in Ridgway with the Blessed Sacrament. The guest speaker was Father Larry Richards, pastor of St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie. After reading the Gospel account of the miracle at the wedding at Cana, Father Richards focused his talk on



Mary's words, "Do whatever he tells you." Bill Moore, president of the Clearfield Chapter of the World Apostolate of Fatima, led the prayers of intercession and Father Campbell led the Act of Consecration. Abby LaBorde, daughter of

Ken and Noreen LaBorde of Clarita, crowned the statue of the Blessed Mother. Abby is a third grader of St. Francis School in Clearfield and had received her first holy Communion a week prior to the march. Benediction was followed by enrollment of the brown scapular.

Nearly 1,000 take part in Cathedral Prep, Villa Outreach Day

ERIE - Nearly 1,000 people combined for a minimal 5,000 hours of service to the Erie area community April 22. The efforts of the 550-plus students and faculty from Cathedral Prep High School and the 350-plus students and staff from Villa Maria Academy were focused at more than 75 sites throughout the area from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Activities included helping children and the elderly to outdoor clean-up.



Some items on Prep's to-do list were cleaning up the grounds at the Barber National Institute, Frontier Park, Asbury Woods Nature Center, Tom Ridge Center and the SSJ Neighborhood Network, taking a group of Make-A-Wish kids to Splash Lagoon, picking up garbage and downed limbs at Presque Isle and cleaning and repair duties at Camp Notre Dame. Activities from Villa Maria volunteers included yard work at several area non-profits including St. Martin Center, Blasco Library, St. Benedict Children's Center and L'Arche's Oasis Home, taking part in a "Bucket Brigade" for Habitat for Humanity and stacking shelves at the Second Harvest Food Bank. Members of Villa's show choir performed at area retirement homes. Several groups stayed at the school preparing meals that were delivered to Emmaus Soup Kitchen.

The outreach day was organized by Father Michael DeMartino and Sister Mary Ellen Plum, SSI, directors of campus ministry at Cathedral Prep and Villa, respectively. "There were a lot more environmental-minded projects this year," Father DeMartino said, noting that this was Prep's second outreach day and Villa's first. Since the schools merged, he credits the influence of Villa's recycling program on Prep's decision to "go green," as Prep will begin its own recycling program this year. "We've become more environmentally aware, and you could see that reflected in the service projects this year. We stress that Christian service, most of the time, involves other people. It's also an even older call from God the Father to be good stewards of his creation."

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