Welcome Back

A nother summer has flown by and we are nearing the fall with all nature’s beauty. Where did this year go? I want to reintroduce you to Dcn Gerry Bach.

I hope you had a chance to meet him at NDICE this year. Dcn Gerry has graciously stepped up to the ‘computer’ to replace retired NDICE Newsletter editor, Jim Alt. We cannot thank Jim enough for all he has done for the deacon community for over 40 years. Dcn. Gerry is capable and ready to keep the Newsletter alive and our NDICE community informed. Also, I want to give a ‘shout out’ to our past president, Dcn. Paul McBlain thanking him for his service to our community. I did hear from Paul’s wife Helen and she shared they are in the process of moving into a new home near their daughter. Also, Paul has recovered sufficiently to assume some deacon duties at their new parish. God is good!

Our theme for the year 2020 is Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue. We have a great line-up of speakers with years of experience in the theology of their topics and they have walked the walk as they talk the talk. I feel you will be rewarded through their presentations and much more informed on the deacons role in the process. They will be introducing themselves through this coming year in articles on their topics. Welcome back - more to follow — Peace Dcn John

Ecumenism: A New Mandate

O ne of the greatest initiatives and transforming consequences of the Second Vatican Council—which brought about the renewal of the liturgy, ecclesiology, the diaconate and many other monumental reforms in the Catholic Church—is the rethinking and emphasis on the Ecumenical relationships we have with our Protestant and Orthodox sisters and brothers moving us more closely to Christian Unity. In addition to this is the Catholic Church’s new approach to Interreligious Dialogue with faith traditions of other world religions, and the importance and understanding of Religious Liberty in both of these realms.

A meeting of “Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (Orthodox)-center-meeting Melkite Patriarch-Emeritus Gregorius (Eastern Catholic)-right- at an audience at the Orthodox Pharnar in Constantinople (Istanbul).”

Pictured left to right: A theology student from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium; the Secretary-Bishop of the PCD from Sri Lanka; Fr. Bob Flannery.

The new National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States mentions in a number of places the need and necessity for deacons to be well versed in Interreligious Dialogue.

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Taize Ecumenical Prayer Service at the recent National Workshop on Christian Unity in St. Louis—Taize Brother Emile from France robed in white on the left.
Continued from Page 1

Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue. With this mandate in mind, the National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education, to be held at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio this coming July 19th to 22, 2020, will be an intensive workshop addressing Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue

and Religious Liberty. With my twenty-one years as a diocesan ecumenical and interreligious officer and a past-president of the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers for six years, I have been asked by your NDICE President, Deacon John Fridley, to be the coordinator of the this summer’s program and one of the speakers for your upcoming conference in July. I also share your important diocesan interests since, in the mid 1990’s, I served as a board member and president of the National Association of Diaconate Directors and in that capacity attended one of your NADD gatherings, held at Notre Dame at the time.

Perhaps your diaconal formation addressed some of these ecumenical and interreligious issues as you were preparing for ordination or maybe you have had some instruction in this regard through other diocesan or other ongoing education programs.

Regardless of either of these scenarios, there are always new understandings and developments in the ecumenical, interreligious, religious liberty and other fields. Repetition is also a basic educational tool to help us remember the basics and continue to learn along the way. Our upcoming institute experts plan to give high level, yet practical presentations to complement whatever instruction you may have had in your earlier studies and background. It is always beneficial to reiterate and reinforce previous learning as we bring our own experience and situation into the area of ministry being studied.

Divine Liturgy at St. Gregory’s Orthodox Cathedral located at the Phanar in Constantinople (Istanbul)

Some things are universal and need no explanation
Deacon’s Wives Meet Work to Define Their Roles

Rhonda Heim—Wives Representative

The New Program “Both wife and…” Cheri Hall’s brainchild.

In this busy world of ours we all wear many hats and are all pulled in many different directions. The Women’s gathering tried to look at how the wives of deacons deal with this challenge.

We all recognize the unique position we hold as wives of Catholic clergy. We not only support our husbands in their ministries, but we enjoy our own ministries that are varied and far reaching. In order to be able to get to know each other and to share with one another how we have found our way, we couched it in the frame of “Both Wife/And…” After all, that is who we are.

This ‘Both/And’ concept was the brainchild of Cheri Hall, our previous Women’s representative. She relates how she meditated and prayed over the diversity of ministries and the problem of dualism in our society when the idea of “Both Wife And…” occurred to her as a way to share with one another. As she expresses it, “We are women who live the sacrament of matrimony— the sacrament we share with our husbands while supporting our husbands who through the sacrament of Holy Orders are clergy in the Roman Catholic Church. We are women of diverse backgrounds, interest and lived experiences. We are women who continue to find our voice as to just how a wife or widow of Catholic clergy is understood and spoken or written about. We continue to be in formation and an entity to be understood.”

With the help of her granddaughter Maddie, they designed the “Both Wife /And” button (illustrated above).

As each woman entered the social, we were given a button. During the social we were able to get into small groups and share what follows the “And…” for each one of us. Some women were new to the Diaconate community and were just finding their way; some were still raising small children; some had been in the Diaconate community for decades. All had wonderful stories of how they are serving the body of Christ.

Society of St. Lawrence Deacon Pins

The Society of St. Lawrence, the Diaconate Community of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, has been providing deacon pins to our brother deacons and their wives for many years. We thank you for your support of this ministry.

Check or money order: Society of St. Lawrence c/o Deacon Gerald Savage 36 Broad St. Tupper Lake, NY 12986

Questions: Deacon Gerald Savage Email: GSavage7@roadrunner.com or Call: 518.359.3297

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After years of trial and error, hand wringing and just plain old procrastination, online registration is finally here.

The board in a unanimous decision approved REGFox as the official registrars of NDICE. You may not of heard of REGFox, Listed by Google a one of top ten on-line registration systems – that’s because they always work with your company’s branding. Use our logo on all the advertising and on the site itself. The company’s identity is completely hidden! Setting up the site is easy and versatile, allowing for a number of variations and making the folks at NDICE look extremely smart.

Probably the most exciting part of an on-line registration system is the time it will save our officers, namely the Treasurer, John Hempen and the Executive Secretary, Hank Babin. The analytical information, record keeping abilities are second to none, and all the Names, email addresses, phone numbers, home addresses, and Parish information is provided in a data base or spreadsheet, accessed by the touch of a button. That information can be printed on name badges, attendees sheets for the conference or store for future use in advertising, marketing statistics used for future conferences.

Here are some of the unique features of REGFox:

- **Conditional Logic Actions Make Your Registration Experience Dynamic**
  Registration forms can be complex as various registration levels may require differing sets of required data. Navigate this normally mind bending challenge with ease. Create multiple paths for each registration level and setup their rules using Actions. You can set up rules for formatting and visibility of certain fields based on various criteria and only capture what is needed for each registrant.

- **Social Media Integration**
  Every Page Optimized For Social Media
  When your event page is shared, we make sure it looks good. We also give you customization to control the image and description that is shown in news feeds.

- **Deposit Control**
  Total Control On Deposit Settings
  Not all registration classes and levels are the same. Whether you are using a Credit Card, Debit Card or Parish Check, we have different options when it comes to deposits. You choose whether or not deposits are allowed at each registration level and set the deposit amount. Then you set the date on which the balance is due and RegFox will charge the attendee’s card automatically on the day it’s due.

These are just a few of the advantages of automating the registration process. As always, your Board of Directors is at work to ensure your NDICE Experience is a pleasant one.

Any questions please refer them to Dcn. Gerry Bach, Managing Editor NDICE Newsletter and WebMaster.

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**NEW FEATURES**

A new feature in the newsletter is called “Final Mass”

It is a way to honor our departed deacons. We will set aside some space in each issue to list the deacons who have passed away in the previous two months. A list will be compiled annually and read into the minutes at the business meeting at the NDICE Conference.

Please send me the Deacon’s Name, where he served, and the date of his passing.

Send it to: Final.Deacon.Mass@gmail.com

Thanks for your help!

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**A New Deacon’s Input Column**

This is where we want your input on a certain topic.

This month’s question:

When was the last time you preached or heard from the Ambo about the True Presence or Ecumenism?

Send your response to: Deacon Gerry – Deacon1948@charter.net
A Spirit of Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council taught that the restoration of full visible communion among all Christians is the will of Christ and essential to the life of the Catholic Church. 66 An ecumenical spirit should be integrated into all aspects of formation. Those who are or will be engaged in pastoral ministry must acquire “an authentically ecumenical disposition”67 in their lives and ministry. The purpose of formation in ecumenism is to educate hearts and minds in the necessary human and religious dispositions that will favor the search for Christian unity. A genuine ecumenism should be thoroughly incorporated into all aspects of diaconal formation,68 remembering that “genuine ecumenical formation must not remain solely academic; it should also include ecumenical experience.”

152. The Second Vatican Council also urged “its sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions.”70 Such a spirit must imbue a desire for ecumenical and interreligious cooperation with Jews, Muslims, and members of other religions. The formation program must assist the participant in achieving a spirit of welcome, respect, and collaboration among people of good will. “The concerns of justice, peace, and the integrity of human life join together all churches and all religions.”71 Diocesan formation should model and facilitate this collaborative cooperation. IV. Assessment: Integrating the Four Dimensions in Formation Programming

153. “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”72 All ministry flows out of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are given to the People of God not for the benefit of the individual minister but for the benefit of the Church. As a result, any discernment of gifts and charisms must involve the ecclesial community. Since the charisms are ecclesial, any discernment process must also be ecclesial in nature. This is especially true for the ordained ministries of the Church. An individual who presents himself for ordination to the diaconate is accountable to the Church, who mediates—confirms—his vocation. 67 Ecumenism and dialogue Dimensions in the Formation of Deacons Interreligious cooperation Discernment must be ecclesial in nature

154. It is essential, therefore, that those who are responsible for selection and formation, including pastoral placement, discern whether the participant has integrated the various dimensions in formation that are needed for an effective diaconal ministry. Further, consultation with the participant’s pastor, the faculty, other pastoral field education supervisors, mentors, those whom the participant serves, and, if married, his wife is crucial

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There has been a lot of clerical hand-wringing of late about Catholics who don’t believe what the church teaches about Christ’s presence in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. According to the Pew Research Center, only one-third of Catholics agree that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ. Almost 70 percent believe that during Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion “are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”

This certainly shows a failure in catechetics, but I think the church faces a greater problem: Like the Pew Research Center, Catholics have an impoverished idea of what the Eucharist is really all about.

Much of Eucharistic theology — especially the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation — goes back to the 13th century, when people rarely received Communion at Mass. They went to church to adore Christ present in the Eucharist, and the purpose of Mass was to transform the host into the body of Christ so that people could adore him. Devotionally, the Mass was not all that different from Benediction, where the Eucharist is placed in a monstrance to be adored by Catholics.

In order to explain how what looked like bread could be the body of Christ, 13th-century theologians used the avant-garde thinking of the time: Aristotelianism.

In ancient Greece, Aristotle described reality using concepts of prime matter, substantial forms, substance and accidents. This allowed Catholic theologians using Aristotelian philosophy to explain that the “substance” of the bread was changed into the body of Christ while the “accidents” (appearance) remained the same. Thus, “transubstantiation.” Using Aristotelian concepts to explain Catholic mysteries in the 21st century is a fool’s errand. When was the last time you met an Aristotelian outside a Catholic seminary?

I personally find the theology of transubstantiation unintelligible, not because I don’t believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, but because I do not believe in prime matter, substantial forms, substance and accidents. I don’t think we have a clue what Jesus meant when he said, “This is my body.” I think we should humbly accept it as a mystery and not pretend we understand it.

In any case, Jesus did not say, “This is my body. Adore me.” He said, “Take and eat. This is my body.” Only in the early 20th century, with the encouragement of Pope Pius X, did receiving Communion again become common in the Catholic Church.

The church also spoke of the Eucharist as making present and effective the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. But even here, the concept of sacrifice was quite limited. Only in a holocaust sacrifice was everything burnt. In most Hebrew sacrifices, some of what was sacrificed was eaten in order to show God’s communion with his people.

At the 2005 synod of bishops on the Eucharist, the bishops were arguing about whether the Eucharist is a sacrifice or a communion. Pope Benedict had to intervene and explain to the bishops that it was both, something the bishops should have learned in their first course on sacramental theology.

The context of the Last Supper is also essential to understand what Jesus was instituting. The Last Supper was a Passover meal where Jews remember the Exodus and thank God for his gracious acts toward his people. Here they also renew their covenant with God.

The Mass must therefore be seen as a sacrificial meal where we give thanks to God, especially for the gift of his son; where we renew the new covenant with him; and where we are united with him through Christ.

The Mass is not about adoring Jesus or even praying to Jesus. In the Eucharistic prayer said by the priest at Mass, we pray to the Father through, with and in Christ. We give thanks and praise to God for his wondrous deeds, especially for raising up Jesus as our savior.

The Eucharistic prayer asks that the Spirit transform us so that we can become like Christ, or as St. Augustine said, that “we become what we receive.” Ultimately, the Mass is more about us becoming the body of Christ than it is about the bread becoming the body of Christ.

The Mass renews the covenant that commits us to follow in Christ’s footsteps in loving our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the marginalized. The Eucharist is about making us more Christ-like so that we can continue his mission of establishing the kingdom of God, of bringing justice and peace to the world.
### NDICE 2020 Tentative Schedule of Conference Events

Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio

#### Sunday, July 19

- **12:00 pm** Registration Opens  
  Location: FP
- **4:00 pm** Opening Mass  
  Speaker: Fr. Bob Flannery  
  Location: BR2
- **5:00 pm** Dinner  
  Location: FP
- **6:30 pm** Welcome Address  
  Speaker: John C. Fridley  
  Location: BR2
- **7:00 pm** Keynote Address  
  Speaker: Fr. Bob Flannery  
  Topic: Need for Awareness  
  Location: BR2
- **8:15 pm** Evening Prayer  
  Location: BR2

#### Monday, July 20

- **7:00 am** Breakfast  
  Location: FP
- **8:00 am** Morning Prayer  
  Location: BC
- **8:15 am** Mass  
  Location: BC
- **9:30 am** Session 1  
  Speaker: Rev. Walter Kedjierski, Ph.D  
  Topic: Ecumenism 101 Part 1  
  Location: BR2
  
  - *Orthodox & Protestant Communities*
- **10:30 am** Break  
  Location: BR2
- **11:00 am** Session 2  
  Speaker: Rev. Walter Kedjierski, Ph.D  
  Topic: Ecumenism 101 Part 2  
  Location: BR2
- **12:30 pm** Lunch  
  Location: FP
- **2:00 pm** Session 3  
  Speaker: Rev. Walter Kedjierski, Ph.D  
  Topic: Interreligious Relations  
  Location: BR2
- **3:15 pm** Break  
  Location: BR2
- **3:30 pm** Evening Prayer  
  Location: BR2
- **4:00 pm** Free Time  
  Location: BR2
- **5:30 pm** Dinner  
  Location: FP
- **7:00 pm** NDICE Follies  
  Location: BR2
- **8:30 pm** Free Time  
  Location: BR2

#### Tuesday, July 21

- **7:00 am** Breakfast  
  Location: FP
- **8:00 am** Morning Prayer  
  Location: BC
- **8:15 am** Mass  
  Location: BC

### Have a Safe Journey Home!
to the discernment process. The surest indicator, however, is the participant's previous and present effectiveness in Church service. If conducted seriously and communicated frankly, assessments can be valuable occasions for the discernment, affirmation, and development of a vocation. Assessments should be made and communicated on a regular basis. There are multiple ways of assessing, including self-assessment, faculty and mentor assessment, and peer and pastoral supervisory assessment, to name but a few. Different situations will require different forms and levels of assessment. Every assessment, however, has a dual purpose. It affirms the participant in identifying his gifts and capabilities, exhibits areas for his further growth and development, and indicates his limitations. It concurrently provides a similar assessment of the formation program itself. The assessment outcome of an individual participant can demonstrate the program's achievement in integrating the various dimensions of formation, that is, the effectiveness of its structures and scheduling, and the competency of its faculty, staff, and administrators. Simply stated, the assessment of the individual participant also points out the strength, potential, and limitation of the formation program. The following are some indicators that a formation program is successful, measured by the participant's ability to manifest:

1. An increase in holiness of life
2. An ability to clearly articulate the Catholic faith
3. The capacity to apply church teaching and practice to concrete societal issues and pastoral concerns
4. A sensitivity to inculturate the Gospel within the communities in which he lives, works, and ministers
5. His embrace of the universal nature of the Church and its missionary-evangelical spirit
6. A balanced capacity for and commitment to the ministries of word, liturgy, and charity, demonstrated in his words and deeds
7. A commitment to ongoing growth in the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation
8. A capacity to foster the communion and mission of the lay faithful, in collaboration with the bishop and diocesan priests
9. An obedient and humble service to all in the name of the Church
10. His ability to celebrate, in accordance with the Church's legislation and with due reverence and devotion, those liturgical and sacramental acts that the Church entrusts to the deacon.

A well-conceived diocesan formation program will comply fully with the Congregation for Catholic Education's document Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons, as well as this Directory.