



The Deacon's Call

Newsletter of the Baltimore Deacon Community

August 2015

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Introduction to this issue of the *Deacon's Call*

We are very blessed to have three wonderful articles in this issue. The first is the Archbishop's homily for this year's Permanent Diaconate Ordination. These are great words of encouragement for all deacons. In Jim Mann's article he shares his experience responding to the Lord's call to take on a new assignment. We thank Frank Laws for his moving reflection on the ordination of his son, Fr. Joshua Laws. Please pray for all our seminarians and their families.

We also are deeply indebted to Kate Sullivan for her hard work producing the final product. The Deacon's Call is beautiful and professional. Please consider writing an article for the next issue. Our hope is that the Deacon's Call will be by deacons and for deacons. Your input is most welcome.

~ Lee Benson

Answered Prayers

By Deacon Jim Mann

A few months ago, I found myself taking stock of where I was in my life and in my diaconal ministry. I was 70 years old, in my 28th year as a deacon, and in good health. My wife and I were still very much in love and were enjoying the extra time to be with each other, now that I am retired as a judge, with our nine children and their spouses and our 32 grandchildren (soon to be 33). I enjoyed my assignment as one of two deacons at our "home" parish, got along well with the pastor and staff, and knew and loved all the people whom I served. I was content – I was comfortable.

There was one issue in my ministry, but I felt it had been resolved. Often when I would go to Mass, parishioners would ask if I was preaching and expressed disappointment when I told them I was not assigned to preach that day. It got to the point where I offered to preach more often. But our parish is a small one with a limited number of preaching opportunities. I was okay with that. In fact I was relieved. I could truthfully tell people that I had tried to be scheduled more often but that it just wasn't possible. I could enjoy my "free" weekends without guilt.

But I made a mistake. I said to one of the parishioners that if the Lord wanted me to preach more often, I was sure he would open the door for that to happen. I didn't consider that a prayer of any kind but maybe it was now that I look back on it – because within two days of my saying

those words, my telephone rang. It was the pastor of a very large parish calling to ask me to consider coming there to serve as deacon.

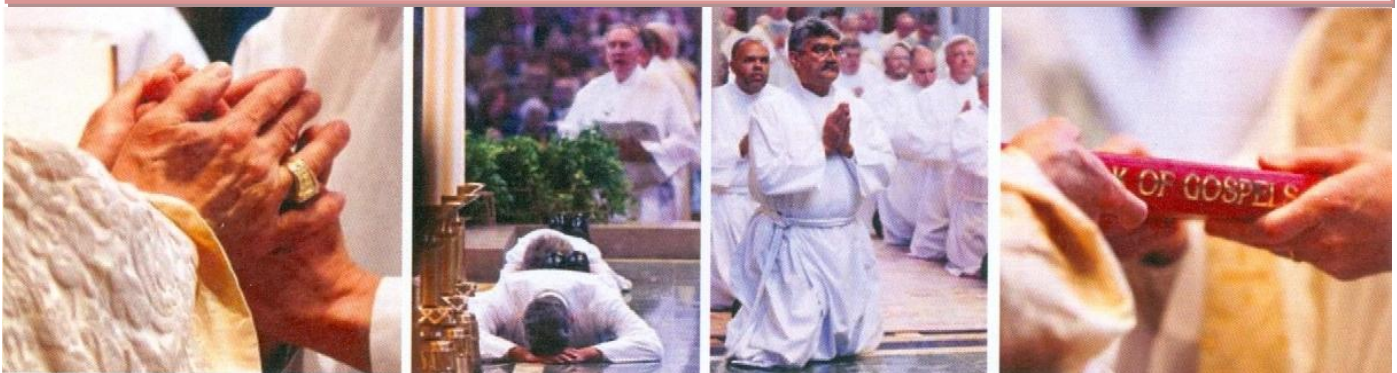
At my age, a transfer was the last thing I was expecting. I did not request it and did nothing to cause it to happen. In fact, I tried to discourage the pastor by telling him how old I am. But after praying and discerning, my wife and I concluded that the Lord was calling me to do this. The large parish had no active deacons while our much smaller parish had two. It would have felt selfish for us to say no. So, even though it was hard to say good-bye, I accepted the transfer.

And now, a few months into my new assignment, I am no longer “comfortable.” I have gone from knowing practically everything and everyone to knowing almost nothing - not even how to turn the lights on! But already I can see how good, how renewing, how energizing this new assignment has been for me. I have been stretched as a preacher and as a deacon – I am busier than I ever have been in ministry. But our always faithful Lord has been with me. The blessings my wife and I have already received have been much more abundant than the struggles.

So my “take away” from all of this is that no matter where we are in life or in ministry, the Lord is still present, still working in us and through us and, most of all, for us. I remember praying, long before the issue of this transfer came up, for the grace to finish strong, as a Christian and as a deacon. In this new assignment, I believe that He is answering that prayer. And I believe that often He begins to answer our prayers the moment we express a willingness for Him to open new doors. †

Permanent Deacon Ordination

A Homily by Archbishop William Lori



Following is Archbishop Lori's homily at the Ordination to the Order of Permanent Deacon on May 16, 2015 when eight men were ordained.

I. Introduction

- A. On this very special day, the Lord Jesus calls you and me his friends. What joy that should bring to all of us – to be the friends of Jesus. What a precious gift friendship is. We may have many acquaintances but only a few really good friends. Jesus is truly our friend: he loves us with an infinite, merciful, and self-giving love.
- B. The Son of God has gone to great lengths to win our friendship. He assumed our humanity, bore our burdens, and nailed them to the Cross. In our humanity, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, giving redeemed human nature a place at the right hand of the Father.

And it is Jesus, not ourselves, who takes the first step in making us his friends: "It was not you who chose me but I who chose you, to go forth and bear fruit..." In Baptism, the Lord has drawn near to us and has given each of us a vocation to love, a vocation that becomes specific when we have the discerning heart of a disciple.

C. Dear brothers so soon to be ordained:

Some years ago, you and your wives embraced the Lord's call to marriage and family. The Lord blessed your love for one another and made it a living sign of his love for the Church. Your homes became a domestic church where the faith was taught, lived and passed on wholeheartedly to your children. Your homes radiated Christ's love to all, especially to the poor and needy. You participated generously in the life and mission of your parishes... always with minds and hearts open to the will of God.

D. After careful discernment, the Church now calls you to a new vocation, a vocation to the permanent diaconate, a vocation within a vocation, one might say. With the consent of your wives and families, you were formed for this ministry and now you are here to be ordained. It has been quite a journey for you and your family. As you take this step, I hope you are convinced that you are the friends of Jesus.

II. "Ordained Friendship"

- A. What does it mean, dear brothers, when the Lord says to you on this, your ordination day, "You are my friends"? Does it not mean that by the prayer of the Church and the laying on of my hands the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you and imprint on your inmost being a new likeness to Christ, that of Christ the Servant? Does not your friendship with Jesus take on a new dimension and depth such that you will be a sacramental sign of Christ's self-giving love?
- B. This is both a great gift and a responsibility. The permanent change wrought in you by diaconal ordination not only authorizes you to minister as deacons but will remain as an inner conduit for the strength and grace you need to serve as Jesus did, generously and lovingly. How important that you keep this channel of grace and strength wide open through meditation, prayerful reading of Scripture, spiritual direction, and the frequent and worthy reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Growth in friendship with Jesus means you will fulfill your ministry not in a minimal and grudging way but in a free and wholehearted way.

III. Three-Fold Ministry

- A. What, then, does the diaconal ministry consist in? As you know so well, it is a three-fold ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Charity. Allow me a brief word about each of these, beginning with the ministry of the Word.

WORD

- B. In the first reading, we met Jeremiah, sometimes called "the reluctant prophet." Called by God to proclaim and bear witness to his Word, Jeremiah offered two excuses: The first is, "I know not how to speak"; and the second excuse is, "I am too young." Well, we can all dispense with the second excuse; it's later than we think! In fact, God himself rejected Jeremiah's second excuse, "Say not 'I am too young.'" And it seems to me that the Lord recognized what lay behind it. It's not just that he was young, he was also afraid: prophets often become martyrs. So the Lord told Jeremiah that he would supply the strength he lacked: "To whomever I send you, you shall go... Have no fear before them..." As we hear God speaking to Jeremiah, let us also hear the Risen Lord speaking to his apostles and to us, his friends, as he ascends into heaven: "Be not afraid, go teach all nations!"
- C. What about Jeremiah's first excuse, "I know not how to speak?" This will haunt us when we're trying to write a homily after a long week at work or trying to figure out how to share the faith with people of differing cultures. When we meet with people who have left the Church or given up on God then we may find ourselves saying, "I know not how to speak!" Notice that God did

not dispute Jeremiah's claim, "I know not how to speak". Instead, he made up for Jeremiah's deficiency: "See, I place my words in your mouth!" In saying this, God did not give Jeremiah an excuse to ramble in the pulpit, or to preach a canned homily or to share his private opinions with a waiting world. Jeremiah had to wrestle with God's Word and make it his own, and so do we. If we are the friends of Jesus we'll have the courage to pray over God's Word to study it, let it challenge us, and let it change us, so we may preach and bear witness to the Word with credibility and effectiveness. If we are the friends of Jesus, the Word we preach will flow into people's hearts because what we have to say to them is what we have in our hearts.

SACRAMENT

- D. The second facet of your ministry is to serve the Church's sacramental worship – assisting in the Church's Eucharistic liturgy by proclaiming the Gospel, leading the General Intercessions, assisting at the altar, and distributing the Body and Blood of Christ. You will baptize, conduct liturgies of the Word, and preside at weddings and funerals. Indeed, for most parishioners, your role in the Church's sacramental worship will be the public face of your ministry as ordained deacons.
- E. Here too we are to manifest the beautiful truth that Jesus has called us his friends. We do this by fulfilling our role in the Church's public prayer in such manner that we call attention to Christ and not to ourselves. God's People don't benefit from gimmicks or theatrics but rather from a prayerful and reverent execution of our roles in the liturgy that bespeak Jesus' love for his people and our love for Jesus, the Risen and Exalted One. The Church's prescriptions for celebrating the liturgy should be second nature to us so that when we are engaged in the Church's sacramental worship, we can truly focus on drawing those we serve into the mystery of Christ's love, there to experience his mercy and healing, there to be nourished and strengthened so that all of us, clergy and laity, can truly be and become missionary disciples. How important that we pray *before* we celebrate and *while* we celebrate, so that our lives may give God glory *after* we have celebrated.

CHARITY

- F. The final component of the diaconal ministry is charity which, in the Acts of the Apostles is described as waiting on tables. Your role at the heavenly table prepares you to set an earthly table for those in need. Charity is not an appendage to your ministry but really is at its core. You proclaim the Word and minister at the altar so that you can serve the poor. And in serving the poor, you truly show yourselves to be the friends of Jesus for he told us that whatever we do for those in need we do for him. When we have recognized the face of Jesus in the poor and vulnerable then we will know that our friendship with Jesus is real.
- G. There can be no doubt that Jesus is with us in the poor and disadvantaged in this City of Baltimore and in all the counties that make up this local Church. You are not the only providers of charity and social services but your ministry is to help everyone in the Church to make the connection between what we believe and how we worship with our service to the poor. In a phrase, you are to practice a charity that evangelizes.

IV. Conclusion

- A. As we now enter upon the Rite of Ordination, I join with everyone here, especially your wives and your families, in praying that your friendship with the Lord will continue to deepen and that your ministry as deacons will bear the abundant fruit of God's love for the Church and for the world.
- B. May God bless us and keep us in His love. †

The Prodigal You Love by Sister Theresa Noble

Inviting Loved Ones Back to the Church

A Book Review by Deacon Lee Benson

These are some of the most frequent questions I get asked, and I suspect many of us get asked, "What do I do about my child/ grandchild/ nephew/ niece/ etc. who have left the faith and the Church? I am so concerned about them. What can I do?" I share their concerns about my own children and grandchildren. Maybe a help for us all is Sister Noble's book, *The Prodigal You Love, Inviting Loved Ones Back to the Church*. The book is a very pleasant read and very down-to-earth. Sister does not offer impossibly difficult or overly spiritual advice. Rather she offers an excellent combination of practical actions and spiritual advice.

First off, this is not a book to hand to your loved ones, pray that they read it and expect the book to do all the heavy lifting for you. Not at all. Instead this book's intended audience is you, the evangelizer. The focus is on ways you can change, ways you can grow and ways you can learn to love more deeply. Simply put, the book offers insights into the seemingly impossible task of sharing your faith with a loved one. As Sr. Noble writes, "The task of evangelizing our friends and family is not for the fainthearted or those weak in faith. It is a hidden work without fanfare or instantaneous results. We work with the knowledge that we may not be successful. Jesus himself was not successful in calling all those he loved to him. But we can be sure that trying is always better, for our loved ones and for us, than not trying at all."

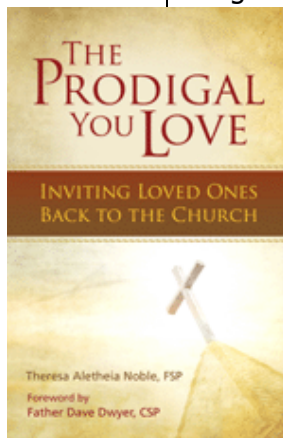
Sister gives her personal testimony in the opening chapter. She lived an idyllic Catholic childhood. She even participated in door-to-door evangelism

with her father. In her college life, she began questioning her beliefs and ultimately left the Church. After graduation and before attending law school, she took a trip to Costa Rica. There she lived and worked in a village filled with people of faith. She observed their rhythm of daily Mass. One day she decided to attend. This decision provided the spark to renew her faith. Later she had an encounter with God reminiscent of Augustine's and Monica's experience in the

garden in Ostia. "Suddenly a conviction filled me: God exists! I could feel his presence in a way I had not felt since I was a child." "Immediately I knew my life would change." Sister Noble came home, joined a local parish and was confirmed. In the following chapters Sister expanded on her testimony and filled in some of the gaps.

Each chapter starts with a short vignette from her life which she uses to introduce the chapter topic. Topics include humility, the importance of prayer, relying on the Holy Spirit and handling doubts.

All chapters are excellent and, therefore, it is hard to pick a favorite. The one I choose as my favorite is the chapter on doubt. First Sister offers some instruction on doubt from the CCC. There are two types of doubt, voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary doubt is purposefully and actively questioning and denying faith in God. Whereas involuntary doubt is doubt that comes and goes as part of our daily lives. We do not foster or encourage it. Rather we ask God to increase our faith as doubts crop up. When we encounter our loved ones doubt Sister encourages us not to overreact. Instead we should see this moments as



opportunities "to help the person find a path that, in the end, is closer to the water than when he or she started to question their faith." She also asks us not to falsely portray our lives as doubt-free. "It is so important to provide a model of faith for our loved ones that is not superficial in its lack of natural doubt." We all share our doubts but also our trust in God with "the assurance that God is trustworthy." Sister concludes with the insight that we can only do so much for the doubts of

our loved ones. "Doubters must work through their questions and experiences for themselves with God's light shining through the darkness of their doubt." This book offers excellent advice and encouragement. Sister does not offer a cookie cutter solution. Rather she gives us helpful guidance for the difficult journey that is the return of our loved one to a relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church.✚

The Deacon Convocation will take place on **October 16-18, 2015** at the Bolger Center in Potomac, MD. The presentations will focus on the deacon's ministry to families, his own and others. An impressive list of presenters has been assembled, and this promises to be an especially practical and fruitful weekend for the deacons and their spouses. As always, time for prayer and fellowship will be included in the schedule.

Registration forms have been sent out weeks providing full details. If you did not receive it, contact Cindy Orr at 410-547-5552 or corr@archbalt.org. For now, please pray for the convocation and make

Reflection on Ordination

By Deacon Frank Laws

The *Deacon's Call* asked me to share my reflection on serving at my son's ordination in June. I remember thinking that the experience must have been pretty special for Greg Rapisarda when his son John was ordained. It definitely was moving; I was fighting tears throughout most of the liturgy. I was not prepared; however, for how sitting and standing beside Archbishop Lori drew me into the sacrament.

Whatever the causes for the decline in numbers of those answering the call to priesthood, on June 20th a packed Cathedral of Mary Our Queen demonstrated that the Church of Baltimore supports and wants good men to answer that call. Four young men entered the Cathedral that morning as deacons and left as priests. The hundreds who came to celebrate the sacrament with them, the



joy, anticipation, and love that poured from the main body of the Cathedral toward the altar as Chris, Francis, Carlos, and Josh received the sacrament of Orders for the second time, gave loud and clear testimony that the Church embraces her priests as a mother embraces her children.

One of those children was my son, Josh Laws. Because of that, I was asked to serve the Archbishop on the altar as the Deacon of the Word. I had the unbelievable privilege of calling forth the Ordinandi by name to come to the main altar to receive the sacrament, and sat next to the Archbishop as he administered the symbols of the sacrament. The experience opened my eyes and heart and soul in new ways to the richness and depth of this aspect of our Roman Catholic faith.

One of the first things that struck me was the symbolism in the seating of the deacons. When the deacons gather to attend ordinations to priesthood, as fellow recipients of Orders we show our support and solidarity with brother deacons who have gone on to receive further ordination to the orders of the priesthood and the episcopate. Our presence as a body is noticed by the priests. We have come from an order that was accepted by priests with hesitation to one that is very much embraced and appreciated, in a familial way, by the priests. We affirm them, and that developing relationship, by taking the time to participate in the ordinations of new priests.

But we are not priests, so we do not sit with the priests. As members of a lower order, we sit at their sides, as we do when we assist them at Mass, standing with them as we serve sacramentally our respective roles in the Body. And we are ordained, so we do not sit with the laity. We sit at their sides as well. As deacons, we have the unique perspective of being able to walk with and among the ordained, as members of the ordained, and with and among the laity, as members of the laity. I'm not sure how theologically correct that is, but it is the way I have experienced my diaconate and what struck me as I sat on the altar. There is richness to our order not present in any other, a fullness unique to the order of permanent deacons.

Sitting beside the Archbishop at Josh's ordination, I saw and felt this aspect of our calling in a different, closer way. One of the major blessings of being a deacon with a family is to administer the sacraments to family members, walking your daughter down the aisle and performing the wedding rite or baptizing your grandchildren. Serving at Josh's ordination was a similar, moving experience. Feeling the prayers of the congregation as they washed over the prostrate men on the altar during the litany of the saints, being able to look into Josh's eyes as the Archbishop received his hands in his pledge of obedience, and being that close as the Archbishop massaged the consecrated oil of chrism into his palms, consecrating the hands that would shortly consecrate the bread and wine, there was a tangible sense of the Holy Spirit enfolding all of us in receiving Josh into the order of priests. How do you describe something that so deeply moves your soul? I don't have the words, but those of you who have participated in the flowing of grace in celebrating sacraments with your children know what my limited vocabulary cannot express.

The capstone of this experience came the next day, as Josh celebrated his Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Stephen. Standing beside and with my son as we held aloft the body and blood of Christ – I am getting choked up even as I remember that moment as I write this.

People often remark to his mother, Duffy, and me that we must be so proud of our son. Of course we are. But we are no less proud of both of his sisters and brother. What moves us most is that he is so profoundly happy with his life choice. Being that close to him as he offered his life to the Body of Christ, being with him as he celebrates Mass, it is also very apparent to me that the Holy Spirit is deeply, infinitely, happy as well.

A collateral blessing for Duffy and me is to see the close friends Josh has made and close bonds he has formed with some truly extraordinary men. Witnessing from such a

close vantage point the brotherhood of the priests and seminarians Josh associates with, and getting to know them more personally than would otherwise have been the case, gives us great confidence that as Josh grows and develops as a priest, there are solid men surrounding him and walking with him. It also fills us with hope for the Church of our children and grandchildren; there is a lot to look forward to. †

Frank is a permanent deacon assigned to St. Stephens Bradshaw. His son, Fr. Joshua Laws, was ordained in June 2015 and is assigned to Holy Family Catholic Community.

Deacon Personnel Board 2014 – 2015

Deacon Charles Hiebler

Deacon Scott Lancaster

Deacon James Mann

Mrs. Kathy Passauer

Deacon Harbey Santiago

Deacon Mark Loepker

Mrs. Kathy Sullivan

The Deacon's Call

Newsletter of the Baltimore Deacon Community – August 2015

Issues are published quarterly, normally in March, May, August, and November. The deadline for articles is on the 15th of the month preceding publication. Your comments and ideas for future newsletters are welcome.

We need articles! Please consider writing a brief article on an aspect of your ministry or a review of a book you have read or a film you have seen.

Please email comments to any member of the Communications Committee.

~Lee Benson, Chair

Current Emmaus Groups

St. Ephrem Fraternity

2nd Friday of each month at
10 a.m.

Immaculate Conception

Contact: Deacon John Gramling
410-823-0694

St. Lawrence

3rd Friday of each month
8:30 a.m.

Location varies

Contact: Deacon Mark Soloski
410-664-4654

St. Vincent Emmaus Group

Meetings: On announced
weekends

Location: Double T Diner –
Rt. 40 West

Contact: Deacon Jack Ames
(jeamesjr@verizon.net)

Holy Trinity

2nd Tuesday of each month
6 p.m.

Holy Trinity, Glen Burnie

Contact: Deacon Kevin
Brown
410-544-6330

Urban Emmaus Group

2nd Saturday of each month
8 AM

St. Peter Claver/St. Pius V

1546 N. Fremont Ave., Baltimore

Contact: Deacon Will
Witherspoon
410-599-8327

Deacon Families of Central Maryland (includes wives)

Fourth Sunday
(location changes)

Contact: Deacon George Sisson
301-473-4800

If you have started a new Emmaus Group, or if your group's information needs updating, please provide the pertinent information to *The Deacon's Call*.

Special Dates

I apologize if there are any errors in these lists. Please let me know if you have any corrections.
Thank you, Kate – katesullivansfo@gmail.com

Deacon Ordination Dates					
Charles	Hiebler	9/8/1984	George	Walker	9/15/1986
William	Fallon	9/29/1984	Leroy	Moore	7/9/1988
Gary Lee	Fulmer	9/29/1984	Robert	Baker	9/6/1992
J. Edward	Bee	9/13/1986	Nathaniel	Cordova-Ferrer	9/17/1994
John	Coster	9/13/1986	Peter	Barbernitz	9/7/1996
Robert	Lynne	9/13/1986	Jack	Connor	9/7/1996
J. Donald	MackNew	9/13/1986	Stephen	Cooley	9/13/1997
George	McAndrews	9/13/1986	Rodrigue	Mortel	7/5/2001
Paul	Shelton	9/13/1986	Karl	Bayhi	9/25/2004

Wedding Anniversaries

Charles & Sheila Hicks	8/13/1955	Joseph & Connie Cinquino	8/14/1976
Jack & Shirley Connor	9/11/1956	Stephen & Nancy Roscher	8/14/1977
David & Anna Conley	7/29/1958	Clifford & M. Angela Britton	8/27/1977
Anthony & Mary Jean Grillo	8/22/1959	Vito & Doris Piazza	8/28/1977
Michael & Joyce McCoy	9/19/1959	Michael & Annette Baxter	8/27/1978
Robert & Betty Keeley	7/9/1960	Gerald & Jeannine Jennings	9/2/1978
Ralph & Connie Trautwein	7/27/1963	Mark & Sandy Loepker	9/9/1978
Victor & Carol Petrosino	8/25/1963	Allen & Lynda Greene	8/20/1979
Frederick & Chris Seibold	8/29/1964	Kevin & Monica Brown	8/31/1979
James & Joyce Mann	7/16/1966	Edison & Carmen Morales	9/29/1979
Paul & Helen Ciesla	8/19/1967	German & Hillevi Flores	7/4/1980
James & Kate Sullivan	7/18/1970	Lawrence & Carol Matheny	7/18/1981
Charles & Patricia Baynes	8/29/1970	Robert & Betty Baker	9/11/1981
Francis & Mary Jean O'Keefe	7/17/1971	Alex & Anita Rodriguez	7/16/1982
Francis & Mary Ann Laws	9/11/1971	Lawrence & Harriett Teixeira	7/30/1982
Joseph & Patricia McKenna	9/30/1972	Gary & Ellen Dumer	9/18/1987
Richard & Lee Anne Clemens	8/4/1973	Frederick & Maureen Bauerschmidt	9/17/1988
Nickolas & Lisa Pitocco	8/20/1973	James & Kay Barth	9/11/1993
Paul & Susan Cooke	8/31/1974	Robert & Sally Smith	8/24/1996
Willard & Lois Diane Witherspoon, Jr.	7/3/1976	José & Joseline Gabin	7/4/1998
George & Dinah Sisson	8/7/1976	Timothy & Meghan Maloney	7/15/2000
		David & Donna Ludwikoski	8/2/2003

Necrology

Frederick	Einbeck	8/14/1972
John	Potyraj	7/16/1983
George	Marick	7/26/1986
Joseph	Rafferty, Sr.	7/9/1988
Joseph	Lurz	8/8/1989
Daniel	Murphy	7/15/1995
Charles	Kruger	9/27/1997
Joseph	Landers	7/11/1998
George	LeFevre	8/28/2000
Melvin	Baranoski	9/15/2000
Chester	Jakowski	8/27/2001
Leo	Nuedling	9/11/2001
Vincent	Perticone	8/14/2003
John	Codd Sr.	8/04/2004
D. Vincent	Provenza	8/12/2004
Richard	Johe	8/14/2005
Francis	Moritz	8/04/2006
Earl	Smith	9/9/2007
Michael	Flamini	9/24/2011
J. Kenneth	Pivec	7/30/2012
James	Monaghan	9/14/2012
Richard	Morris	9/20/2012
Joseph	Schultz	8/4/2014

