



Inside This Issue

Deacon Retreat 1

Deacon Attire..... 2

Book Reviews

Evangelii Gaudium

Kevin Brown 3

Kevin Bagley 4

Harbey Santiago 6

Emmaus Groups 8

Other Information 8



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

First, I want to extend a profound thank you to Kate Sullivan for taking on the responsibility of formatting *The Deacon's Call*. This task is very time consuming and Kate has done a great job getting the *Call* into excellent shape.

Secondly, we offer thanks to our writers for this issue: Harbey Santiago, Kevin Brown, Kevin Bagley and Kevin Reid. It is a great joy to have three different perspectives on the Holy Father's Apostolic Exhortation. Their articles bring new insights into this important document.

Lastly, I ask for other members of the deacon community, deacons and wives, to consider writing an article for future issues. The theme of our next issue is "Ministry to sick and to those grieving the loss of a loved one." We are not looking for scholarly insights. Rather we hope to offer your personal insights gained from your experiences in these areas. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the deacon community by writing an article for our next issue. Send them to Lee Benson, labdon70@gmail.com.

May the Holy Spirit, spouse of the Blessed Mother, continue to guide and strengthen you in your ministry.

— Lee Benson

Annual Archdiocesan Deacon Retreat – 2014

By Kevin Reid

We began our Retreat Friday night with Evening Prayer, followed by a wonderful dinner then on to our first session. It began with a pre-recorded video presentation from our retreat leader Fr. Martin Burnham, who was engaged at Theological College in Washington, DC, at an end-of-the-year Mass being held for Seminarians.

We began with an exercise that was called "From where are you coming from." It was each of us taking an inventory of the past 24 hours of our lives. We reflected on how we rose, what we ate, how we felt throughout the previous day. It gave all of us an opportunity to look back at how many things there are in our lives that perhaps we might just take for granted: like having a safe place to sleep, warm food, a job, or maybe by just owning a car. It was a great beginning for a weekend and caused each of us to rest and take stock of our ministries, our prayer life and our family life. It was a very interesting experience as there was a lot of group sharing among our brother deacons.



Continued on page 7

Deacon Attire in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

An article in the CR several months ago highlighted a decision by the Bishop of Wilmington to allow deacons there to wear clerical garb; gray shirt with white Roman collar, when performing certain functions such as visits to prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, and when presiding at wakes, graveside services, or addressing public group as a representative of the parish or diocese.

So what are the guidelines in the Archdiocese of Baltimore? Let's begin with the USCCB's National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of the Permanent Deacon.

Paragraph 89 states: "The Code of Canon Law does not oblige permanent deacons to wear an ecclesiastical garb."

Further, because they are prominent and active in secular professions and society, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops specifies that permanent deacons should resemble the lay faithful in dress and matters of lifestyle. (my emphasis)

Each diocesan bishop should, however, determine and promulgate any exceptions to this law, as well as specify the appropriate clerical attire if it is to be worn." Guidelines for deacon attire in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are set forth in section 3.2 of the Norms, Deacon Handbook, a copy of which is provided to deacons, and also found on the Archdiocesan web site:

<http://archbalt.org/vocations/deacons/norms-part-three.cfm>.

These norms are approved/promulgated by the Archbishop.

Section 3.2 states that "The customary attire for a deacon is secular clothing." The use of clerical attire (i.e. a Roman collar) is not the ordinary dress for a deacon. The use of clerical attire is normally limited to special situations where a deacon is assigned to a ministry, for example, a hospital or prison, and evidence of clerical status is deemed appropriate by the institution or the deacon's supervisor."

The norms also make clear that when exercising a liturgical role or function, deacons should wear the appropriate vestments such as an alb, stole, and in some cases dalmatic. As can be seen the wear of clerical garb by a deacon in the Archdiocese of Baltimore is substantially more limited than our neighboring diocese. By wearing secular clothing the deacon, while an ordained public minister of the Church, shows that he remains rooted in the secular world and tied more closely to the lay faithful. ☩

Collared in Wilmington

By George Matysek

Some deacons are getting collared in the Wilmington Diocese. Bishop W. Francis Malooly (former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore) has given the green light for permanent deacons of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore to wear Roman collars in certain situations.

Gary Morton has the scoop in the [Jan. 13 issue](#) of The Dialog. The story points out that Canon Law neither requires nor bars deacons from wearing Roman collars, leaving the decision to the local diocese:

Deacon Hal Jopp models the gray clerical shirt and Roman collar that deacons will wear for certain ministries. (The Dialog/Don Blake)



Permanent deacons in the diocese will wear Roman collars and other clerical attire when ministering in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes and other limited situations under a new policy established last week by Bishop Malooly.

The policy, the bishop said, will help deacons gain access to such facilities, give a "clear public sign" that the deacon is an ordained Catholic minister, "serve as a witness" that may prompt other men to ask about the diaconate or priesthood, and remind the deacon of his "Christ-centered life in service of the Gospel."

In addition to correctional facilities, hospitals, and nursing homes, deacons will wear clerical attire when visiting the homebound, presiding at or attending wake and graveside services (where an alb or stole may be worn), or when giving an invocation or addressing a secular group as a representative of his parish or the diocese. The policy limits the wearing of clerical attire by deacons to those ministries.

The attire will consist of a gray clerical shirt and white clerical collar, black dress pants, black dress suitcoat when appropriate, and black dress shoes. The gray shirt will differentiate the deacon from a priest, who normally wears a black clerical shirt.

Deacons will continue to wear liturgical vestments as they preach, proclaim the Gospel, baptize, witness marriages and perform other duties in church. ☩

BOOK REVIEWS

What does Evangelii Gaudium mean for the Church?

By Deacon Kevin Brown

On March 18th, the Archdiocese of Baltimore will host a forum on Pope Francis' first year, and what it means for the future of the Church. Much of that forum may be devoted to the ideas found in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, which is Pope Francis' response to the 2012 Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization. The Church has discussed the new evangelization in great detail, but the Pope is calling for action, and a transformed Church that will result--a Church filled with the joy of the Gospel, and a Church that shares that joy. The Pope writes that an "evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!"(10)

This brief essay could be filled with "sound bites" from this 51,000 word exhortation, but I would like to comment on three themes found in the document: a call to avoid the "idolatry of money," his "tips" for better preaching, and his pastoral approach to evangelization and spiritual care which emphasizes an encounter with a God who loves us, as is seen in the faces of the poor, rather than the teaching of doctrines.

The Pope criticizes both "consumerism" and the control of economies by financial interests. "Money must serve, not rule!"(58) --governments, central bankers, hedge fund operators, and speculators should take note. Some commentators have

seen the Pope's remarks as coming from a socialist perspective, but he focuses on the human factors of economic activity, and the need for ethics in economics, rather than focusing only on the profit factors. We have become used to the "talking heads" on television saying that the American economy in particular relies on consumption--hence the emphasis in the economic reports on "Black Friday" sales and other consumer-driven statistics. We have also become propagandized by the idea that central banks and their banking allies, interest rate and currency manipulation, and the health of the stock market somehow rule and represent the real economy. In contrast to such ideas, Pope Francis says that we must avoid exclusion and inequality in economic activity: "I exhort you to generous solidarity and a return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favors human beings."(58)The section of the exhortation on "Some Challenges of Today's World" is worth reading and rereading.

As deacons, we of course have the responsibility to preach. The Pope says that the faithful and "their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!"(135) The pope devotes several pages to suggestions for

better homilies, based on careful study of the Scriptures and respect for the principle of brevity. The liturgical context of preaching should be respected, so that the homily does not become a lecture or a speech.

The Pope tells us that "preaching should guide the assembly, and the preacher, to a life-changing communion with Christ in the Eucharist."(138) The preacher should be aware of the faith of the people, and how to express himself in a culturally aware manner, so that he knows what must be said and how to say it: "the Lord truly enjoys talking with his people; the preacher should strive to communicate that same enjoyment to his listeners. (141) The preacher has the wonderful but difficult task of joining loving hearts, the hearts of the Lord and his people." (143)

Homily preparation begins with seeking an understanding of the message of the sacred writer, but goes beyond exegesis to understand the effect that was intended, whether it was consolation, or a teaching about God, or "a summons to praise or missionary outreach," and this intended effect should be preserved in our preaching.

The Pope wants us to be deeply engaged with the Word, so that the preacher "must be the first to let the Word of God move him deeply and become

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incarnate in his daily life.”(150) He also reminds us that once we have personalized the text, we must help our listeners relate it to their own lives and what they need to hear. Finally, we must pay attention to how the homily is presented-- using images that appeal to our people, and using language that is at once simple, using common vocabulary, but also clear, concise, and well organized. Fresh evangelization for our times, the Pope says, would benefit from homilies that speak to people’s hearts, and from support for popular piety, liturgies that reflect the diversity of everyday life, and catechesis that attends to the “way of beauty.”

As deacons we are called to the three-fold ministry of the Word, the Liturgy, and of Charity. The latter indicates that we must have special concern for the poor among us, just as the first deacons were chosen to

assist the widows. Pope Francis is deeply concerned for the poor, and for their material well-being. Yet he adds that the "worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care...They need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the



sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith.”(200) These words also apply to the all of the spiritually poor in our society, who may be deceived by moral relativism, and an individualistic, indifferent and self-centered mentality. There are also many who have had no proper catechesis, or are without spiritual companionship on their journey in life. We must all--laity and clergy alike--be attuned to the need to accompany others on their journey of spiritual growth.

I will close this very brief encounter with Pope Francis with his own words: “Jesus... [wants us to be] men and women of the people...By so doing we will know the missionary joy of sharing life with God’s faithful people as we strive to light a fire in the heart of the world.”(271) If we follow the Pope’s prescriptions, we will change ourselves, change the Church, and change the world. Pax et Bonum! †

Evangelii Gaudium

By Kevin Bagley

As I read *Evangelii Gaudium* I could not help but to think that it was similar to an inaugural address, a mission statement by a corporate executive or a plan of action by a military leader. This apostolic exhortation filled me with hope and a renewed sense of purpose, a reminder of the missionary journey we have joined. Below are some of the points I found significant.

The exhortation has seven area of focus:

- a) The reform of the Church in her missionary outreach
- b) The temptations faced by pastoral workers

- c) The Church, understood as the entire People of God which evangelizes
- d) The homily and its preparations
- e) The inclusion of the poor in society
- f) Peace and dialogue within society
- g) The spiritual motivations for mission

“Go therefore”, “go forth”, “Go, I send you”, “you shall go”. All phrases from sacred scripture instructing God’s people on what we are called to do using our gifts to show, lead, tell and model our belief in the one true God. We are asked by the
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Holy Father to become involved. The baptized are called to this missionary work and we deacons, having received the gift of Orders, make this outreach part of the fabric of who we are. Pastoral ministers must live their vocation not just at work, but in every aspect and facet of their lives. Ministers must realize that their participation in evangelization never weakens their commitment to pastoral work. A missionary enthusiasm must fill our very being so we are always joyful in our work, not letting our work consume our zeal.

The church is to be a place of mercy, freely given, where all are welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. As preachers we understand that the homily can actually be an intense and happy experience of the Spirit, a consoling encounter with God's word, a constant source of renewal and growth. The homily surpasses all forms of catechesis as the supreme moment in the dialogue between God and his people leading up to sacramental communion. The homilist must express his feelings toward scripture in a way that sparks in the listener a desire to continue the conversation in their own way.

The Holy Father suggests that preparing for preaching requires love. We devote time and attention to the things we love. To prepare a homily he suggests the following: 1) call upon the Holy Spirit in prayer; 2) give your entire attention to the biblical text (*lectio divina* is helpful here) understand it completely - do not distort it; 3) the Word must penetrate our souls that we might be able to penetrate the soul of others; 4) know that God loves you and Jesus saved you, use your words to convey this love; 5) let the Spirit put the words on your lips that you could not find by yourself; 6) know your congregation - link the text to the people; 7) correctly use attractive images to convey the message you deliver; 8) use simple language, not theological jargon; 9) be positive, always pointing to hope in your message.

To believe in and to follow Christ is not only right and true, but it is beautiful and capable of filling our lives with new splendor and total joy, even when we are troubled. We are called to be joyful

messengers, guardians of goodness and beauty, shining in the life of fidelity to the Gospel.

At the very heart of the Gospel is a life in community and engagement with others. We are called to go forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters. Authentic faith involves a deep desire to change the world, leaving it better than we found it.

Each community is an instrument of God to the liberation of the poor enabling them to be fully a part of society. Solidarity is the coming together in a common mindset putting the needs of the entire community ahead of the success of a few. We must look after the needs of every member of the community lifting up those needing assistance, while the fortunate exercise charity to help their brothers. This is not an economic nor political statement, but the realization that we are on this planet together and together we can freely look out for each other with love, generosity and charity.

Unity is greater than conflict. Faith is not fearful of reason and encourages a dialogue between science and faith. Ecumenism is to be fostered as we are all pilgrims on the journey together and can be a path to evangelization. Meaningful dialogue with our Christian brothers can lead to fruitful gifts that will further unite us as believers. Our relations with God's chosen people, the children of Israel, are part of the life of Jesus' disciples. Interreligious dialogue must be fostered for peace in the world. This dialogue must be open to the differences of each while being open to understanding of the other. We must work with all people to defend human dignity, and build a peaceful coexistence.

We must be like the apostles at Pentecost going forth into the world with our hearts burning with the Holy Spirit. We must have a personal encounter with the saving love of Jesus which provides us with the experience of salvation. Enthusiasm for evangelization is based on the conviction that the divine is inside of each of us and it is up to us who are missionaries to help release this understanding in others. Mission is a passion for Christ and his people.

The Pope ends this exhortation calling upon Mary, our mother, to intercede on behalf of the ecclesial community in our mission to evangelize. †

The Joy of the Gospel

By Harbey Santiago

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.” With these words Pope Francis introduces us to his most inner pastoral thoughts contained in his first Apostolic Exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel.” In this deeply personal document, we get to meet Francis, not as Bishop of Rome, not as successor of Peter, but as the shepherd of the Universal Church. In it we encounter Francis’ mind; a mind able to cut through 2000 years of ideological clutter and present the gospel in the same way those who have never heard of the Risen Christ experienced it: in a simple, fresh and deeply challenging way. While reading this book I found myself underlining and marking long swaths of text in the hope that someday I might find an opportunity to use some of his ideas in my own homilies (If you are going to steal, steal from the best!).

I think anyone who is involved with the Church’s efforts of evangelization should spend time reading and reflecting on this work. Sadly, a few paragraphs could not do justice to the treasure trove of ideas we encounter in this book. However, if I were to condense the Pope’s message in just a few words it would be this: Without Joy and Mercy there cannot be evangelization.

As clergy I know I don’t have to mention how busy we all are in our ministerial and personal lives. And it is a bit unrealistic to expect every deacon and priest to read every word which flows from Pope Francis’ pen. Having said this, if you feel you are too busy to read this entire book, I urge you to at the least spend time with Chapter III. In it we hear the Pope speaking specifically to those who have to preach the Gospel every Sunday. In this chapter we can see how Francis wants us to approach preaching. Specifically paragraphs 135 to 175 give us his advice about homily preparation and scripture reflection which will benefit anyone looking to re-energize his preaching.

In all, “The Joy of the Gospel” is a highly readable book, full of practical wisdom and directly challenging each one of us to embrace the New Evangelization with renewed vitality and fervor. If you take the time to heed my recommendation, I hope you find this work as beneficial as I did. †

SAVE THE DATE!



Day of Enrichment



October 4, 2014
St. Louis Clarksville

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The evening finished with a "social" with libations provided for us by the Office of Clergy Personnel, and organized by DPB Vice-Chair, Dave Page. A good time was had by all, and it was a great opportunity for each of us to reconnect with each other. The night ended rather early and most of us were in bed by 11:00 PM.

Saturday morning began with a full breakfast and then Morning Prayer. Our first session on Saturday was called "Christ in my Vocation." We reflected on the original call we each had received to diaconal ministry. We revisited that time and prayed over the good work that had begun in us through the Holy Spirit, and how far we have come in our lives since ordination.



Farther Martin celebrated Mass with us that morning after our first session. We then went to lunch and on to our second session entitled "Christ in my Ministry." We reflected and shared where and how we experience the Lord in our various ministries of charity, word, and liturgy. At 3:00 PM we took some well needed and appreciated "down" time. Many of the men rested and napped, while some deacons hiked around the beautiful grounds and others simply lost themselves in prayer or in reading.

Our third session on Saturday began at 4:00 PM and was titled "Christ in my Family." Each of us was asked to consider how we are both clergy and family men, and how we put limits on what we say we can do and still have TIME for those whom we love. We shared how our wives play such important roles for us as our sources of emotional support and with homiletic preparation. This was followed by Evening Prayer and then dinner. We finished the night with individual confession time with Fr. Martin.

We began Sunday morning with breakfast and Morning Prayer followed by Mass. Fr. Burnham preached on the Road to Emmaus and his homily rang very appropriately to us deacons for the time that we had been spending together with Christ on retreat this whole weekend.

Our last session was called "Taking Christ from the Mountaintop." We once again split into small groups and discussed lectio divino and the many different forms of prayer. Father Burnham shared with us many baseball metaphors during our five sessions with him; the best of which was getting back to the fundamentals. He called it "the Oriole way" as a comparison to the Orioles of the 60s and 70s and their emphasis on the basics. Coincidentally, this was the first retreat he ever led personally. I have just one comment to share about our retreat with you, Fr. Burnham. It was a GRAND SLAM. You swung for the bleachers and never looked back. †

***"Come and Rest Awhile" Mk 6:31
Father Martin Burnham S.S.
Bon Secours Spiritual Center***



Current Emmaus Groups

St. Ephrem Fraternity
 2nd Tuesday of each month
 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

The Amen Corner
 Last Thursday of each month
 Noon — An Poitin Stil Irish Pub
 St. Vincent Fraternity
 Contact: Deacon Jack Ames

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 a.m. — 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*.

The Deacon's Call

Newsletter of the Baltimore Deacon Community
 April – June 2014

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

COMMITTEES

Deacon Personnel Board

Chair: George Sisson
 Vice Chair: Jim Sullivan

Policy Committee

Chair: Jim Sullivan

Communications Committee

Chair: Lee Benson

Ongoing Formation Committee

Chair: Dave Page

Placement Committee

Chair: Paul Mann

The committees need members! Both deacons and wives are invited — just email the appropriate committee chair.

Special Dates to Remember

Ordination anniversaries, birthdays and wedding anniversaries for the past quarter will appear in the next newsletter.

