

Deacon News

April 2000

The Newsletter of the Archdiocese of Newark Permanent Diaconate

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25 Years of Permanent Deacons In Newark To Be Celebrated

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the presence of permanent deacons in the Archdiocese will be marked on Saturday, December 9 with a Mass in the Basilica Cathedral followed by a convocation and lunch in the Archdiocesan Center.

The anniversary is being planned by the executive committee of the archdiocese's Conference of Permanent Deacons.

A feature of the celebration will be publication of a history of the diaconate in Newark in booklet form. Deacon Robert V. Thomann, of Ridgewood (Class of 1977), a member of the executive committee from Bergen County, has been commissioned to write the history which will include examples of the impact ministries of deacons have had in the archdiocese.

The history will trace the diaconate from 1973 when the late Archbishop Thomas A. Boland authorized the introduction of the permanent diaconate in Newark following restoration of the 2,000-year old order by Pope Paul VI.

The Archbishop's action followed a recommendation to him by the then archdiocesan Senate of Priests. Monsignor Richard M. McGuinness, pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Newark and a member of the Senate, had championed the introduction and was appointed by the Archbishop as diaconate director.

Monsignor McGuinness, now pastor of St. John the Apostle Parish in Linden, directed the formation and ordinations of the

first four classes of candidates, before becoming rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmittsburg, Md.

When Monsignor McGuinness went to Maryland late in 1979, Father Edward Swierzbinski, University Hospital chaplain, became interim director until June, 1980. Deacons Charles Kiley and Walter Stanecki, associate directors, then became interim directors until January, 1980, when Father (now Monsignor) Timothy J. Shugrue was named director of formation and later director of the Permanent Diaconate Office.

Deacon Michael M. Matthews succeeded Monsignor Shugrue, present pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Montclair, and three years ago Deacon Edward W. Porter succeeded Deacon Matthews.

FIRST CLASS

The first diaconate formation class was assembled in September, 1973, in St. Joseph's parish school next to the church on West Market Street. There were 144 applicants in attendance. Of that number seventy-seven were ordained on December 14, 1975 when the practice was to ordain candidates after two and a half years with six months of formation to complete three years of preparation. Formation today extends over four years.

Retreat Coordinators Appointed

The appointment of Deacon Vincent Accardi and his wife, Sheila, of Roselle Park, as coordinators of retreats arranged through the Permanent Diaconate office has been announced by Diaconate Director Edward W. Porter.

The new coordinators succeed Deacon Marshall Andrews and his wife, Jean, who had arranged and moderated retreats for deacons, wives and deacon couples for the past seven years.

"Our diaconate community is extremely grateful to Marshall and Jean for their dedication and resourcefulness in obtaining sites and spiritual advisers for our retreats since 1993," Deacon Porter said. "Most appreciated by us was their unselfish and inspirational presence during the retreats. Responsibility for arranging retreats can be a very taxing experience but always being on hand to see them through requires devotion which Marshall and Jean amply demonstrated."

Marshall, who was ordained in 1992, is director of the Archdiocesan Office of Black Catholic Affairs. Also, he is a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference of Permanent Deacons from Essex County and treasurer of the committee. He lives in Orange and is a member of Our Lady of the Valley Parish.

Jean will continue to arrange and moderate the diaconate's

"For Wives Only" program, which she originated and schedules four times a year. It is a four-hour session, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., for wives of deacons and those of men in formation who pray together and engage in extemporaneous sharing as a support group. The next session is Saturday, May 6, at the Archdiocesan Center.

Deacon Accardi was ordained last year and is assigned to St. Mary's Parish in Elizabeth. Because they were unable to obtain a satisfactory site for a retreat this year for deacons' wives, the Accardis have arranged a "day of renewal" for wives at St. Joseph's Shrine in Stirling, N.J., on Saturday, June 10, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A priest on the Shrine's staff will preside. Participants will be limited to 20. Reservations may be made with the Accardis by calling 908-245-2118. Directions will be provided.

Two weekend retreats are scheduled to take place in the fall, one for deacons only September 22, 23 and 24 at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Newton, N.J., and a second for deacon couples October 6, 7 and 8 at the St. Alphonsus Retreat Center in Long Branch, N.J.