

Conference of Deacons Meeting Minutes

1/29/2011

Conference Call

In attendance: Deacons: Tim Healy, Ed Taddei, Joe Ryzewski, Steve Yatcko, Donna Yatcko, Bob Pallotti, Nick Genovese,

Meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by Tim and the group shared an opening reflection based on a reading from Acts.

Minutes: The minutes of the 11/6/2010 meeting were read and accepted. We suggested they be sent to COD attendees first for review by the Chairperson and then posted on our website.

Treasurer's Report: None made. Bob and Ed will check on Gene to see how he's doing.

Old Business

- Meeting of Regional Coordinators
Per November 2010 meeting, this item is pending further notice by Dcn Pallotti.
- Trends
Bob noted that his analyses indicate several areas of future shortages developing (e.g. Farmington Valley, New Haven area) There are twelve pastors looking for deacons. He is also involved in planning upcoming re-assignments per current policies and pastoral needs. He noted that the Archbishop is open to increased enrollment to the formation program and efforts to attract under-represented groups.
- The Appreciative Inquiry Model will be looked at further in the Fall.- As noted at the previous meeting it is intended to: expand the vision of the diaconate. From the deanery level provide ideas about future directions should be collected and sent to Bob, for presentation to the archbishop and other deliberative parties. This would be an important new role for deaneries.
- 2010 Deacon Annual Retreat - Bob noted the favorable response about the theme of Fasting and retreat in general.

Ministry to Wives of Deacons - Donna

- The Wives' Retreat will be held at Holy Family Monastery on March 19-22, 2011. The theme is "God Changes Everything".
- On April 9th there will be a Day of Prayer for candidates' wives to be held at the Caritas Center.
- Donna also offered to be available at each of the March Inquiry sessions for prospective candidates for the formation program. She noted that being at the first session on March 6th would be particularly helpful in order to answer any questions by wives attending.

New Business

- **Mission Statement** – Tim facilitated a brief review of our Mission Statement as posted on our website. Consensus was that the Statement was good and reflected the need for us to wisely focus our energies in ministerial roles and initiatives. He then guided a “Brain Storming” of what the word “Values’ meant to each of us re the diaconate and the COD. The following words were offered to define it: integrity, vision, purpose, compassion, justice, spiritual, peace, service, prayerful, sharing, out-reaching, bearers of peace. At our next session we will proceed to cluster them and refine our definition.

Deanery Reports - None

Project Reports

A. Vocations

Steve reported that the Committee had met and developed an overall short term plan focused on the upcoming Inquiry sessions in March. It was presented to our Director and subsequently approved by the Archbishop. The project’s status is:

1. A message was sent by the Director to each Deacon requesting they forward at least one name of a person who is / may be interested in learning more about becoming a Deacon. The Committee plans to send them a special letter and follow-up with a phone call.
2. Deacons from the committee are pairing up and speaking to men on weekend retreat at Holy Family Monastery between January and March. Fr. Dave has given them 5 minutes to briefly tell them about the program and invite them to the March sessions. The pairs also remain available afterwards to talk with prospective candidates during their break. Tim happened to be present at one of the retreats and noted how positively it was received.
3. Dcn. Pallotti advised that a letter was sent to Pastors telling them about the upcoming meeting in March. They were asked to announce in their bulletins, encourage men to attend and advise the Diaconate Office for any follow-up.
4. There is a “Gap” in the Archdiocese’s Vocations website. (i.e., There is no info or pathway offered to a person seeking information about the Diaconate or Religious Formation) This can be remedied by adding a brief introduction with directionsfor more information about becoming a Deacon....click onto “ Called to Serve - Permanent Deacons” which is then linked to bring them to the Diaconate website. There they can find out more about the Diaconate and formation requirements. This same approach could be used for those inquiring about the priesthood or religious life. It was also suggested that our website include videos of our activities, testimonies of how being a Deacon has impacted our lives, etc. Dcn Pallotti offered to send a letter to the Archbishop championing our suggestion to enhance the potential of the Vocation website.

- B. Collaboration
Tim reported that Fr. Ron May has agreed to help in this initiative. There is also a seminarian interested in participating. They plan to meet in February.
- C. Retired Deacons
Ed requested assistance in encouraging other younger deacon to assist him in this ministry, given his limitations to get about. He reminded us of the need to find ways to acknowledge and serve those men and their wives who paved the way for us.
- D. Deacon Spirituality Nick
No reported progress - As noted at the last meeting, the thought is to provide workshops, models for development and increase of diaconal spirituality, and a variety of web resources.

Director's Report

I. Recent developments

A. The Deacons will establish a "Courage" chapter for ministering to Gays and Lesbians and their families in the Archdiocese of Hartford. Bob has met with Fr. Paul Check who will be our workshop presenter on April 9, 2011 at St. Thomas Seminary. The committee for setting up the Courage chapter has met twice. At the next meeting to be held in February they will determine a plan on how to communicate this program to the Pastors etc.

B. A Demographic Study on the Diaconate in Hartford. "Planning for the Future" is underway. We will have a better picture by February showing where the projected needs are. Data will be compared with other programs nationally and provide a base for structuring plans in the future.

II. Continuing Education

A. Cont. Ed. Committee's plans for the coming year

1. A workshop Practicum for The New Roman Missal, USCCB will be conducted by Fr. Dave Baranowski sometime during Lent. (i.e. a practical workshop) The Deacon newsletter will feature articles on the New Roman Missal in forthcoming editions. Deacon Pallotti is serving on the Archdiocesan Committee for the New Roman Missal.

2. Bob needs deacons to submit a 150 word essay for the newsletter as to "Why they sought ordination to the Order of Deacon?". The deadline for submittal to the Office of the Diaconate is February 15th. He would like to feature a deacon in each edition. (p.s. These testimonies would be a valuable resource for our "Vocations Project".)

3. Two year program on Issues of Human Sexuality and Beginning Life Issues has commenced. The first presentation was given on September 18, 2010 by Deacon William Urbine, recommended by the USCCB, at St. Thomas. This was a success. There were 80 people, deacons and some of the wives present. The next offering will be at St. Thomas Seminary on April 9 with Fr. Paul Check.

4. The Annual Deacon Retreat is Oct. 15-17 at Holy Family Monastery: Fr. Savage

5. Hyannis Region one Conference, Nov. 13, 2011.- The Region One Directors will be meeting in February to discuss upcoming conference plans and feedback from last Fall's. Feedback: Repots attest that Fr. Ted was excellent, informative, articulate and knowledgeable. He made a complex topic understandable. The workshops were relevant and gave good options. Good facility. A major negative was the breakfast 'food'.

6. The Spirituality Day Dec. 11, 2010 at Holy Family Retreat Center, “*Mary Through the Ages*” was conducted by Dr. Joan Kelly. And attended by 35 persons.

7. The Bishop Conference on Justice will be held on June 11, 2011 from 9a.m.- 3 p.m. at St. Paul High School. There will be a special workshop for priests and deacons on parish organizing for justice and peace. Deacons are asked to volunteer to assist with the logistics of the event. Also, I suggest that we take this opportunity to present Bishop Peter with a plaque of recognition for his extraordinary support of Deacons and the work of justice. Bob would like to see 60-80 deacons and their wives come to this event.

8. The Continuing Education Committee will meet on Feb. 16— Bob suggested to the Archbishop that we pursue a workshop on Religion and Science as a way to be more conversant in these issues, especially as it applies to the challenge of people like Hitchens and Dawkins. He was fine with that. We would also look at the new cosmology and its spiritual implications.

IV. Vocations

- A. Archbishop is open to having 15-20 men accepted into Aspirancy if they are qualified.
- B. There are 12 men accepted for Year One as Candidates.
- C. The Class of 2012 has 15 men
- D. Nine men were ordained this past June 2010.

V. Newsletter

It will include a new series on Contemporary Theologians and Spiritual Writers and Deacon Ministry, People of Christian Witness and a series on Religion and Science. We will also begin a series on why deacons felt called to their ordination. (See earlier noted requests submittals)

Open Discussions

- Bob will send out a note encouraging Deacons to participate in the Channel 20 mass and advising them how to make arrangements to do so.
- Does this Conference Call format work? Yes!. Especially during the winter and as a contingency plan. Bob will invite to others to join us in the future. (e.g. Newly ordained) We acknowledged the need to still meet face to face. Tim offered to follow-up with those COD members who didn't call in.

Closing Prayer was offered by Dcn Pallotti and meeting ended at 10:30 a.m.

The next meeting is, March 12th 2011 @ 9 a.m. at Holy Angels

Respectfully Submitted: Dcn. Joe Ryzewski – Secretary