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## Diacons and

# the Pauline Year

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This second issue of the *New Diaconal Review* appears towards the end of the special year in honour of St Paul inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI in June of 2008. In many places in the Church we have had opportunities for reflecting about St Paul's place in the life of the early Church and the abiding importance of his teaching: for example, there has been a series of articles about him from different angles in our sister journal, *The Pastoral Review*.

The issues surrounding diaconal ministry which we aim to explore in this new journal are all illuminated by St Paul's life and teachings. We think very naturally of him as an evangelist, a preacher of the gospel: one of the key reasons why the Church in the west decided to restore the permanent diaconate was *evangelistic*: curiously we sometimes lose sight of the aspiration in many teaching documents that deacons should be engaged in evangelisation in their places of work. This is obscured if deacons keep their jobs in 'watertight' compartments or if most deacons are retired or semi-retired. Proclaiming the gospel and Christian moral teaching require particular skills in a culture which is increasingly hostile to Christianity: deacons, by virtue of their state of life and the Church's expectation that they should have a special knowledge of Christian social teaching, have an indispensable role to play. As the *Directory* puts it, they are called to 'transform the world according to the Christian order' – the current crisis in western capitalism provides new opportunities to preach this message.

Another area is our ecclesiology. St Paul's theology of the Body of Christ is something we so easily take for granted, without really

thinking about what it means for the visibility and nature of Christian communities. The deacon's liturgical role, standing alongside the priest at the altar, is a powerful symbol of the different roles we all have to play within Christ's Body – as the ministry of deacons becomes more and more a natural part of the life of the Church, we will increasingly feel that a celebration of the Mass without a deacon present is somehow incomplete symbolically.

We are very grateful to subscribers and others for the interest and support they have shown since the publication of our first issue in November. We would like to reiterate our aims: we want to provide a 'mixed' journal, combining material of an academic nature which is not being translated into English by anyone else with articles focussing on the pastoral ministry of deacons and others in diaconal ministry. If you find something you read here requires some effort, don't give up! It does us no harm to be stretched intellectually once in a while. We would like to encourage readers to submit contributions for our journal – details are given elsewhere in this issue. We are also grateful to the editor and publisher of *The Pastoral Review* for their advice and support, and to the international leadership of the IDC.

In this second issue we publish a paper from Dr James Keating (editor of *The Deacon Reader*) about the specific role of diaconate directors, particularly in relation to the deacon's ministry of the altar and his spiritual life. Our first issue began with a major article by Fr Didier Gonnaud of the Archdiocese of Dijon about the sacramentality of the order of deacon; we follow that

up with the first part of a further paper on that topic by Professor Alphonse Borras. We continue our retranslation of the International Theological Commission's document *The Diaconate: Perspectives on Its Development*; we look at the Church's diaconal ministry of charity in a specific way through the experience of one of our diaconate students who for many years has been associated with the Apostleship of the Sea. Another student reflects on the new Foundation degree in Pastoral Ministry established by St Mary's University College, Twickenham (in west London) which has been devised partly to provide academic formation at degree level for diaconate students. The Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church in the autumn of 2008 was an important event in the life of the Church, and Monsignor Paul Watson reflects on the Church's understanding of how we should read Sacred Scripture, to help build up the 'Diakonia of the Word.'

This issue goes to press at the same time as the IDC International Study Conference on Diaconal Spirituality in Vienna. We include a summary of what has happened and there will be fuller reports in our next issue. Also in future issues we intend to include coverage of diaconal work being done in the Netherlands and Eastern Europe and an article which argues why deacons should be enthusiastic supporters of the single European currency.

We welcome contributions from our readers, and details of style and length are to be found on the website of *The Pastoral Review* website. Letters from readers are also welcome. ■

# Presiding at the Liturgy of Charity

## Directing the spiritual formation of the deacon

We aim to provide support for Diaconate directors and others engaged in the task of forming deacons. Dr James Keating is a deacon and Director of Theological Formation of the Institute of Priestly Formation at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, USA. He is the editor of *The Deacon Reader* (Mahwah, NJ.: Paulist Press, 2005). In this article he looks at the often-neglected area of the spiritual formation of a student for the diaconate and the ways in which formators can direct this on the basis of the threefold ministry of altar, word and charity.

In the midst of many administrative duties that are essential to leading a diaconal formation program Diocesan Directors of the Diaconate ought not to lose sight of one vital component to their ministry: the call to bring the deacon *into a love of and fascination with all things holy*. Directors are called by their bishop to assist him in ministering to and forming members of the diaconate in the mystery of Christ's own service. The Director's mission, then, is one that enables deacon candidates to welcome the *mind of the Church* regarding such service. Fundamentally, the director is accountable to the bishop and the norms of diaconal life, ministry, and formation as set down by the Vatican and local directories.<sup>1</sup>

Integrated with these goals, however, the director endeavors to create a *definite spiritual environment* within the formation community. One might immediately argue that this confuses the diaconate

Director for the spiritual director, but that is not the case at all. The spiritual director has set competencies and duties that are well known within any clerical formation system. Beyond these competencies that spiritual directors bring to a formation process it is incumbent upon the diaconate Director to promote the influence of spirituality *throughout all of diaconal life and ministry* assuring that spirituality will not simply become enclosed in the internal forum of spiritual direction and/or the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. How is this spiritual role of the director to be understood and enlivened?

### Aspects of Diaconal Spirituality

The promotion of sound diaconal spirituality is within the purview of the director's mission since he or she is called by the bishop to 'inspire' the whole work of formation, either in its early stages of guiding diaconal candidates or in duties promoting the ongoing formation of the deacon.<sup>2</sup> Directors, therefore, must be vulnerable to the Spirit, offering their hearts in a manner that opens them to share in the holiness of God. 'Those entrusted with the formation (of deacons) must take care that this community be characterized by a profound spirituality.'<sup>3</sup> The community of dea-

cons requires such a profound spirituality because of the call they receive to serve the needs of others *in faith*. The foundation for such service is the communion with Christ that each deacon possesses as he welcomes the mission of Christ as his own defining reality. It is only this communion that can sustain him in prayerful fidelity to his vocation during those times when the consoling fruits of such service are meager. Such service is to be entered into in a manner that relentlessly purifies the deacon's own selfish inclinations<sup>4</sup> and replaces such with inclinations toward eager listening, accurate discernment, and ready response to the needs of others. In order to form a diaconal community of servants, the director needs to instill within those under his or her charge the capacity to listen, discern, and respond. Within these three components exists a characteristic diaconal spirituality that, when matured, enables the order of deacon to fully symbolize the work of the Church among those who are deficient in any number of areas – a poverty of mind, body, or spirit – that calls out to the deacon for an appropriate response in service.

At the very heart of diaconal identity is a coalescing receptivity to the Word (listening), along with the consequent competencies to discern and teach the truth, leading the deacon to enliven in service what has fully engaged his mind and heart in contemplation. As the bishop states to each diaconal candidate at his ordination, 'Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read,

teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.'

Further, these three components of a diaconal spirituality also approximate the three ways the laity ought to be engaged in contemporary culture, as outlined by Cardinal Cardijn in the decades before the Second Vatican Council. This interpenetration between the lay movements of the pre-Vatican II Church and the maturing vision of lay holiness at the Council itself is a crucial reality for the deacon to embrace, as it is he who serves the laity in their role as transformers of culture. The deacon is embedded in culture, as is the laity, but the deacon carries with him the mysteries of the altar to spiritually assist with such transformation in and through the graces and competencies of ordination. This relationship between the *deacon, who lives a lay life*, and the *laity, who are summoned to penetrate the culture with the mysteries of Christ*, is a foundational reality within which all deacon candidates must be immersed.

A central aspect of bringing about the transformation of culture is to have Catholics orient their lives by the truths of the paschal mystery. The paschal mystery is the core of all Christian spirituality and can be configured to the diaconal vocation by meditating upon how Christ's life, death, and resurrection enables, encourages, and instills a *servant-capacity* to listen, discern, and respond<sup>5</sup>. The term servant-capacity refers to those charisms that characteristically inhere within the dia-

1 Such as that published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of the Permanent Deacon in the United States* (Washington, DC.: USBCC, 2005), that for Scotland...and Ireland.... A new Directory of Formation for England and Wales has been approved by the Holy See and is due to be published soon.

2 Congregation for Catholic Education, *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and Congregation for Clergy, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (London: Catholic Truth Society 1998), section 21 of the *Basic Norms*.

3 *Ibid.*, section 26.

4 *Directory*, section 49.

5 John Navone SJ, 'The Sending of the Spirit', *Milltown Studies* (Summer 2005), p. 32.



conal vocation as it shares in the servant identity of Christ. How should one understand these servant charisms? The theologian and psychologist Thomas Acklin, OSB, speaks of God as ‘omni-kenotic’: God is not only all-knowing and all-present, but God’s very being is ordered toward self-emptying, toward self-donation (*kenosis*)<sup>6</sup>. If man shares in the mystery of Christ, he comes to see that he is only fully himself when he makes his life a gift of self, a life of self-donation in service to others. It is this truth of who God is, which Christ revealed, that is symbolized in the public ministry of the deacon.

The deacon’s life is a sacrament because he embodies this mystery of Christic self-donation in and through his ordination. It is this objective mystery that the deacon must enter every day, so that by the end of his life his subjective character reflects the truth of what Christ called him to embody through ordination. The charism of self-donation, of eager availability, then, lies near the heart of diaconal spirituality. How is this eager availability embodied?

The embodiment takes place through the dynamisms of the gift of listening, distinguishing truth from error, and responding to the needs of others, especially as these draw energy and orientation from the paschal mystery of Christ. In this kind of spirituality the deacon is being formed in ‘strength for leadership through service.’<sup>7</sup>

### Listening

As an emissary of the bishop and one who engages the mystery of Christ’s own obedience toward the Father, the deacon is to become a master at listening. He must suffer the death of his own ego and its cacophony of voices so that he is vulnerable to the voice of Christ within his prayer

and the voices of those in need within his ministry. The deacon contemplates the mysteries from deep within his soul – the mystery of Christ’s own obedience unto His death for the life of all and the mystery of suffering found in the poor as they seek meaning and relief in the Christic mystery.

Such poverty is known in the absence of what is due a human person – from education to health care, from housing to food, and from employment to rest. Only the deacon who truly listens can hold both the mystery of Christ and the mystery of poverty in his being at one time.

Listening enables such ‘holding’ because of the One to whom the deacon is attending in his heart: the very Word of God. It is only out of *divine power* that the deacon creatively exists in this tension; otherwise the tension might crush him emotionally. *The fruit of such contemplative listening* is the gift of discernment, of distinguishing what serves the good and what may undermine it. To have discerning deacons minister within society is crucial because the

### *The deacon’s life is a sacrament because he embodies this mystery of Christic self-donation in and through his ordination*

church needs competent ministers to respond to all the rival spiritual and moral voices that have arisen during this age.

### Discernment

Out of the gift and task of listening, the deacon becomes better able to sift through

the voices of truth and the voices of error with members of the Church. This capacity to assist a person in his or her discernment is rooted in the deacon’s intimacy with the mysteries of Christ, so that he recognizes them embedded in the life story of each person who comes to him seeking liberation from confusion or the paralysis of indecision. His assistance in discernment is essentially facilitated by his study of the human psyche and training in the ways of spiritual direction. These disciplines assist the deacon by gifting him with humility so he comes to notice that from *within* the expertise he gained through study he *is weak before the wisdom* of the Holy Spirit. As with all clerical formation the deacon only relies upon guidance from

### *The deacon only relies upon guidance from the Spirit once the asceticism of theological study has been embraced*

the Spirit once the asceticism of theological study has been embraced, otherwise his judgment might be more solipsistic than docile. The Spirit instructs the deacon in what to say and how to say it, a direction offered in measured cadence so that the truth can be received according to the capacity of the counselee to receive. Rather than bringing new truth, the Spirit’s role is a new doing and actualizing of the truth.<sup>8</sup> The Spirit particularizes one’s participation in the paschal mystery in a fashion relevant to each person’s unique identity. The deacon’s conscious participation in the paschal mystery makes him vulnerable to the Holy Spirit, affecting his thinking, in fact becoming the very

principle of his thinking.<sup>9</sup> Such vulnerability marks the foundation for the deacon’s capacity to assist in discernment, wherein he brings to the conversation a communion with the mind of Christ as it inheres in the signs, symbols, narrative, and power of the paschal mystery. Much more than simply giving helpful advice, such power is the consequence of the deacon’s involvement in sacred ministry. He is conscious that his end in any discernment is to bring himself or another more closely to communion with Christ and not simply to give the person new ideas or helpful advice.

### Responding

Filled with the fruits of *listening* and ordered by the wisdom of yielding to the indwelling Spirit in *discernment*, the deacon is prepared to *respond* to the people he serves. His response, however, is not his own. It is a response out of the power of crucified love, a love that defines the deacon and a love he is searching for within the sufferings of the poor he welcomes. The diaconal response is one that has its origin in compassion fueled by intimate knowledge of the crucified Christ. In this way the deacon is porous to the presence of those who suffer and delights in assisting them by his listening presence and words of guidance, which give way to whatever ‘more’ the poor may need and the deacon is capable of giving. In this commitment to notice and listen to those who are invisible to the passing age (Rom 12:1-2), the deacon preserves, in a sacramental way, the beauty of Christ’s self-emptying love<sup>10</sup>

In light of this general spirituality of the diaconate, what can be said to characterize the spirituality and formation of the deacon director? How ought the director to lead the aspirants, the candidates, and

6 *The Passion of the Lamb* (Cincinnati: Servant Press, 2006), p.60.

7 William Ditewig, ‘The Kenotic Leadership of Deacons’ in James Keating (ed.) *The Deacon Reader* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006), p. 277.

8 Navone, op.cit., p. 17.

9 Ibid., p. 32.

10 Bruno Forte, *The Essence of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Eerdmans, 2003) pp. 106-108

the already ordained more deeply into the kenotic consciousness of Christ?

### Aspects of Spiritual Formation for Deacon Directors

It would appear that the Director will draw new life and focus for mission if he or she is disposed to being affected by the listening, discerning, and responding that characterized *Christ's own eager availability to the poor and to His Father's will*. If the Director is willing to submit to such a tutoring, then the wisdom gained from it will serve as a true lodestar for the formation of deacons and candidates. The director, under the mission of the bishop, is to call these men into their own appropriation of the diaconal identity in and before Christ. Authentic spiritual power will be released if the director is him – or herself raptly attentive to Christ the deacon as He appears in revelation. Spiritual sustenance can be drawn for his or her vision of leadership by following the reality of Christ's own diaconate. In this regard, John 13, the last supper foot-washing scene, has

### *Spiritual sustenance can be drawn for his or her vision of leadership by following the reality of Christ's own diaconate*

become an interpretive key to understanding the core of diaconal spirituality. The director ought become vulnerable to the truths of this account and appropriate

them in his or her own life, as well as in the direction given to diaconal candidates. As the International Theological Commission concluded, 'It is not just *any* service that is attributed to the deacon in the Church; his service belongs to the sacrament of Holy Orders, as a close collaboration with the bishop and the priests, in the unity of the same ministerial actualization of the mission of Christ'<sup>11</sup>. The deacon is *sacramentally* entrusted with the *service of Christ* in a way analogous to, but not in the same exclusive fashion as, the priest with the body and blood of Christ. The deacon, as sacramental minister, is called to love people in their particularity by way of the gifts noted above: listening, discerning, and responding. The deacon is not ordained to look for ways to foster the political and social love that is specified by justice. That is the work of the laity. The deacon's spirit is local, familiar, reaching out to *this person now* – more the work of direct action than devising strategies for structural political change.<sup>12</sup> The Director's spirituality orients him or her to go deep within the ordinary and the particular and to help the deacon candidates claim such as the arena for their service. This commitment to penetrating deeply into ministering 'the service of Christ' is two sided: The Director is to enter into prayer as well as into the call from Christ to minister to the needs of others<sup>13</sup>. Both of these constitute the kenotic mind of Christ that deacons share in and Directors attempt to instill within aspirants and candidates. The context for this deep penetration is the apprehension by the deacon, confirmed by the Church, that he is to be publicly sent by the bishop<sup>14</sup>. The way of life

with which the deacon Director needs to be familiar is very concrete and particular: a life that enters deeply into the ordinary so as to minister the service of Christ by way of an episcopal commission. What spirituality can the director draw from the diaconal call in the context of this deacon being sent by the bishop into the mundane? It will be a spirituality that orients itself by the incarnation and by all of its mysteries, but particularly by its mysteries of service, those relational realities that Jesus summons deacons to participate in along with him. 'Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me' (Jn 12:26). '[W]hoever

*'Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me'*  
(Jn 12:26)

wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave.... [T]he Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mt 20:26b-28).

If the Director *listens* to these mysteries, he or she can better *discern* how to be configured in empathy to the call the deacon is receiving. By so doing the director can *respond* to the needs of the candidates in ways that lead them deeper into their apostolic participation – in other words, deeper into the reality of what it means to be sent by the bishop. Directors can assist diaconal candidates with a wisdom born of a lively engagement with these servant mysteries of Christ only to the extent that

the Director shares in the call of Christ to enter deeply into service and prayer. For the director, the deacon candidates, their families and deacons themselves are the poor. *They are the focus of his or her service* and the means of his or her purification.

Doctor of the Church St. Thérèse of Lisieux gives a profound insight into the character of diaconal spirituality when she becomes conscious of and attempts to articulate the core of Christ's mystery: love itself. The Director is called *to minister* a similar vision to the deacon so that the deacon can develop a habit of meditating upon the greatness of this sacrament to which he has been called. Likewise, the Director is invited *to meditate* upon this dynamism of love so that he or she can appreciate and, therefore, promote such a vision. Therese says she wants to become a 'martyr of [Christ's] Love'. For our purposes charity can be seen as the *embodied element* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders as configured by the deacon. Thérèse exclaims,

'I understood that if the church had a body made up of different members, the most necessary and most noble of all members could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that *the church had a heart* and that this heart was burning with love. I understood that it was love alone that made the church's members act, that *if love ever became extinct*, apostles would not preach the Gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood.'<sup>15</sup>

Holy Orders keeps love alive in a sacramental way, assuring against its 'extinction'. If no others were to love the poor, the deacon would keep the hope of such service alive. Within a spirituality of the diaconate, the very act of serving takes on a sacra-

11 International Theological Commission, *From the Diakonia of Christ to the Diakonia of the Apostles* (Chicago: Hildebrand, 2003), section 109.

12 I am accepting a position that clergy ought not to be directly involved in governmental affairs or the partisan political order. I find it difficult to see how a deacon could remain free to preach the Gospel while adhering to a political party platform as a public official.

13 J. Ratzinger, *Journey Towards Easter* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), pp. 97ff.

14 Owen Cummings et al., *Theology of the Diaconate* (Manwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), pp. 87ff.

15 St Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul* (Washington, DC: ICS Publications 197), pp. 194.

mental cast. In these acts by this cleric, grace is communicated in a characteristic way, in a way that establishes the hope that charity will never become ‘extinct’. By his ministry of charity the deacon endeavors to keep the heart alive so as to pump blood into the preaching of priests and into the courageous witness of the laity in culture. The deacon director ought enter this mystery of the ‘sacrament’ of charity and emerge to give the deacon and deacon candidates a clear vision of the hope they bring to the world by embodying a charity that is sourced in God’s fidelity, a charity that they carry within their very order. The

***The diaconate is, in a sense, an enfleshing of the virtue and gift of charity so that it will be present somewhere in the Church at all times, giving hope***

diaconate is, in a sense, an enfleshing of the virtue and gift of charity so that it will be present somewhere in the Church at all times, giving hope. As Pope Benedict XVI noted in *Deus Caritas Est*:

‘[T]he exercise of charity became established as one of [the Church’s] essential activities, along with the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the word; love for [the poor] is as essential to her as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching the Gospel. The church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the sacraments and the word’<sup>16</sup>.

The Pope notes later in the encyclical that the church presides in charity<sup>17</sup>. There is much talk about the unique contribution of the work of the deacon, the specific act that he performs that no one else can. What unique powers does he bring to his ministry that a priest or bishop does not<sup>18</sup>? Could the unique contribution of the deacon be that he *presides at the liturgy of charity* in and through the power of ordination and the sending by the bishop? The bishop and priest preside at the Eucharist, and from such they are called to charity. Alternately, the deacon presides at the liturgy of charity, and so he is called to assist at the mysteries of the Eucharist. Christ is present through the deacon when he publicly ministers to the needy *in a way that preserves and continues the same loving act of Christ*. To so minister is to embody a deacon’s obedience to the mission given him by the bishop. The Director is called to enter this mystery of *presiding at the liturgy of charity* so that he or she can progress in holiness but also to develop a vocabulary of such presiding in order to invite the candidates and deacons to claim this reality as their own. The director will primarily enter this mystery of presiding through the *contemplation of the servant mysteries of Christ*. From this stance of *listening* the director will then *discern* what is central to the spiritual formation of the deacon and call those in formation to *respond* to it. By doing this the director configures him- or herself to the end of his or her ministry: the formation of men who understand, appropriate, and live out the characteristic mark of the diaconate. This characteristic mark is a ministry of charity resulting from participation in the mystery of Holy Orders. It is not simply service or charity that distinguishes the deacon’s way to holiness, but a service and charity *contextualized in obedience to*

*a bishop’s commission*. Such a commission configures the deacon to Christ’s public ministry of service. When prayerful knowledge of this rhythm of participation and commissioning inhabits the Director, then the ‘inspiration’ that is asked of him or her will be authentic. Such inspiring leadership will be born out of his or her *appropriation and internalization of the diaconal mystery* and not simply gleaned from the competencies needed to organize and maintain his or her diocesan office.

**The Diaconal Mystery: Presiding at the Liturgy of Charity**

What does it mean then to say that the unique characteristic of diaconal spirituality lies in his call to preside at the liturgy of charity? Meditating upon this question is vital in order to construct a firm foundation upon which to establish diaconal formation and spirituality. Understanding the liturgy of charity as a metaphor of the liturgy of the Eucharist facilitates a clearer understanding of the identity of the deacon in popular ecclesial imagination. The deacon presides over the work of charity as

***The deacon does not preside at the Eucharistic liturgy; rather, he intones, in the dismissal rite of the Mass, the initiation of the liturgy of charity, charging all to ‘go in the peace of Christ to love and serve the Lord’***

compared with the more familiar sense that the order of priest presides over the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In trying to grasp the nature of the diaconate we can contemplate its mystery more effectively by beholding its core spiritual efficacy around

the act of a deacon’s presidency at the *liturgy of charity*. The deacon does not preside at the Eucharistic liturgy; rather, he intones, in the dismissal rite of the Mass, the *initiation of the liturgy of charity*, charging all to ‘go in the peace of Christ to love and serve the Lord’. This presidency is not a juridical one, but rather one of moral and spiritual collaboration with the mission of the laity. This collaboration is unique in that the deacon paradoxically embodies an *official ecclesial presence* within a *lay lifestyle*.

Charity, as a virtue, is the participation of persons in the work of Christ loving His Church, specifically as they continue His work in and through their choices to promote human welfare. Those who participate in the Eucharist are asked to interiorize this mysterious self-offering of Christ so that the truth of His actions can come to define and empower their own. In this way the ‘real presence’ of Christ continues in time by way of self-sacrificing love and obedience to the truth of the judgments of conscience. All who worship the Father at the Eucharist are called to incarnate the Son’s loving presence among those in need. The deacon, however, has been called to Holy Orders so that an ecclesial and hierarchical symbol is maintained within the world, thus giving hope that the church is *always* being sent to the poor. Unlike the priest, the words of the deacon do not institute the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In fact, the deacon utters no words in the ‘liturgy’ he presides over, except in the silence of his heart as it communes with the mystery that has claimed his life, ‘[I] did not come to be served, but to serve’ (Mt. 20:28).

The deacon unveils the real presence of Christ not in the manner of a priest at the altar but in his eager availability to serve the needs of all. By doing so the deacon is sustained by an intimacy with the mystery of Christ in His promise to be really

16 Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (London: CTS 2005) section 22.

17 Ibid.

18 ITC, op. cit., 106.



present: ‘whatever you do to the least of these you do to me’ (Mt 25:45). The deacon encounters and unveils the presence of Christ in his commitment to assist, enable, and help further the dignity of the deprived. In light of Mt 25: 45 we see that Christ has *identified* Himself with the poor. God eagerly desires to share this love with and for His people to benefit those ‘who need a physician’ (Lk 5:31-32). The deacon’s ministry is a direct embodiment of this divine desire to share Christ’s self-giving life with all. At the dismissal rite the Eucharist ‘processes’ out of the church doors in the hearts of parishioners not as an inert memory of a ritual that engaged only their time, but as a living call from Christ to go to the poor and bring hope. In so doing, the people extend the Eucharistic presence of Christ by way of their service to the needy.

The altar and the needs of the many are integrated in the ministry of the bishop’s envoy, the deacon. The deacon presides by distributing the fruit of the Mass; the divine life within him that called him to orders now inspires, directs, sustains, and enables his outreach toward the poor. Christian hope and charity find a ‘home’ within official ecclesial ministerial structures by way of the deacon witnessing to the virtue of self-donation born of the Eucharist, an action at the very core of the mystery of Christ. This service, of course, is spiritual, holy, and not simply the result of ‘natural’ virtue or the fruit of a motivating ethics lecture in a university. No, this service is the deacon’s form of Christ acting in him (*in persona Christi*). The deacon does not share in the priesthood. Since he shares in Holy Orders, however, he receives a portion of the mystery of *Christ’s own actions*. Though not Christ’s sacrificial self – offering in priestly thanksgiving, the deacon receives the portion of Christ’s own action which insures that the love of many will not grow cold (Mt 24:12).

The deacon’s presiding in charity within secular realities can be likened to the parable of the great feast (Luke 14:15ff). In this story the deacon is told to go to the poor, and fill the house of the Lord with people who will feast on His banquet. The deacon embodies an invitation from God, ‘if the people will not come to me and receive the grace of communion at worship then I will go in search of them and ‘compel’ them to come’. The compulsion in this case, however, is not a physical violence, but a compulsion by way of beauty. United with the One in whose name he searches for the poor, the deacon can break the hearts of those who witness the beauty of love raptly attentive to human need. The beauty of witnessing love in action calls people to the Banquet of the Eucharist, selfless love carrying intimations of the incarnation. There is a *diakonia* of the whole church. All who receive the Mystery in Holy Communion are summoned to ‘go in Peace to love and serve the Lord’, but the deacon publicly stands for the Church in his comings and goings in the nooks and crannies of secular culture.

***It is this public identity born of his call from Christ and confirmed by the bishop that makes his presiding at the Liturgy of Charity effective and iconic***

It is this public identity born of his call from Christ and confirmed by the bishop that makes his presiding at the Liturgy of Charity effective and iconic.

#### **The Laity and the Deacon’s Ministry of Presiding: a Communion of Service**

The deacon is the ‘helper’ or assistant to both priests and laity. In a church that has

service as its essence<sup>19</sup> the deacon’s direct concern for those in need (i.e. intellectually, spiritually, and charitably) is but one expression of the communion of service rendered by other clergy and laity together. All who are invited to the banquet and participate in its graces are ‘compelled’ by the beauty of such divine self-giving to transcend the leanings of the ego and think of the needs of others. When such a communion of service is based upon intimacy with the mystery of Christ all of our freely chosen moral and religious behaviors and commitments invite the world to be evangelized. In rendering this service to the

receive his vocation more fully by encouraging him *to listen for the sound of those who have no voice*. In such humility, the deacon appropriates and models the true nature of church as communion: for Christ to truly alive among us as One who serves. Such truth is beautiful and whoever witnesses to it must be heeded; for what is being revealed is the very nature and dignity of the human vocation. Institutionally, however, it falls to the deacon to inspire the rest of the body of Christ that such iconic service to those in need will always be fixed somewhere in the nave of culture where the liturgy of charity is celebrated.

***Church members, both clerical and lay, can inspire the deacon to receive his vocation more fully by encouraging him to listen for the sound of those who have no voice***

#### **Summary**

The Director of the diaconate is called upon to organize, manage, and lead the office that coordinates deacon life and ministry. This position calls for its director to enter into the truths of the diaconal life as these inhere in the dispositions to listen, discern, and respond to the needs of the poor in charity. Beyond this, the Director is invited to share his or her own love for the diaconal mystery – that life of interpenetration between the mysteries of the altar and the transformation of culture. From within knowledge of this mystery and love for its effects upon the Church and society, the Director draws nourishment for his or her own soul. From this sustenance, the Director guides his or her candidates into the deepest of all diaconal realities: the commitment to preside at the liturgy of charity for the welfare of the whole church. ■

poor, the deacon and those who ‘assist’ him at the altar of service create an icon for others to contemplate and behold. In this contemplative beholding during the liturgy of charity, we have something akin to Eucharistic adoration or the silence that enfolds the elevation of the Host during the Eucharistic prayer. Those in the midst of secular concerns are drawn into the sight of another giving of himself without concern for reward. When others with vulnerable hearts view this diaconal service, a rush of grace may enter their hearts, transforming them from gazers to participants in the liturgy of charity. The deacon can lead the laity into service, and he can lead priests into service as well. Alternately, other church members, both clerical and lay, can inspire the deacon to

<sup>19</sup> Cummings, op. cit., p. 18

# The Holy Spirit, Interpreter of Scripture

In the autumn of 2008 there took place in Rome the Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. Following from this Monsignor Paul Watson reflects on our understanding of revelation and the scriptures. He is a priest of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and Director of the Maryvale Institute there. The institute offers a BA honours degree in Diaconate Ministry which, in collaboration with the Ogilvie Institute in Aberdeen, comprises the academic formation for those training to be permanent deacons in the dioceses of Scotland.

The recent Synod in Rome on The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church has provided the occasion for us all to consider more deeply our mission as Ministers of the Word. Certainly, it is an opportunity to reflect on this in relation to the Diaconate. Both as a priest and having some responsibility for a programme of formation for the Permanent Diaconate, it has been timely for my own reflections.

## *The dual authorship of the Scriptures, human and divine, leads to two interconnected approaches that enable us to grasp both the literal and the spiritual senses of Scripture*

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church there are ten paragraphs under the heading *The Holy Spirit, Interpreter of Scripture* (CCC. 109-119). These paragraphs provide a very useful framework for a reflection on the Diaconia of the Word. They contain a number of key principles, which taken systematically, can suggest a series of steps that will help to ensure that

we are interpreting Sacred Scripture with the mind of the Church. The key ideas or principles can be summarised as follows: the dual authorship of the Scriptures, human and divine, leads to two interconnected approaches that enable us to grasp both the literal and the spiritual senses of Scripture – both senses are essential for our engagement with the living Word of God. Next, three hermeneutical principles are proposed, and finally, there is a summary of the ancient tradition of the four senses of Scripture. The remaining sections of this article will explore the implications of these paragraphs for the ministry of the Word in both the formation and the life and ministry of the Diaconate.

### **The Dual Authorship of Scripture – human and divine**

One of the great fruits of modern scripture scholarship is that the human authorship is being taken much more seriously. Linked to questions and debates about the process of inspiration, recent magisterial documents have asserted again and again that the biblical authors are real or genuine authors, and not, as more traditional art suggests, like dictation machines, simply writing down the words whispered in their ears by the Holy Spirit. Their writing is a genuine willed act, while the guarantee of inspiration is that what they have written is what is also willed by God. The primary implication of this is that our first enquiry must be to discover what the human author willed and intended. It is in this enquiry that we are to draw as fully as possible upon the researches of scholars, using the historical-critical method, to learn what we can about the content, gen-

res, modes of feeling, speaking and narrating, which make up the world of the human author, whether it be the authors of the Old or New Testament books.

However, this is only the starting point, for the Catechism goes on to say that since the Scriptures also have God as their author, then “Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the

*Since the Scriptures also have God as their author, then “Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written”*

same Spirit by whom it was written”. Following *Dei Verbum*, the Catechism now highlights three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it. These are:

- Be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture
- Read the Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church”
- Be attentive to the analogy of faith – the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation.

It is these three criteria that lead us, on the foundation and basis of the intention of the human author, to discover the sense willed by God. Clearly, this suggests that while what is intended by the human author is also willed by God, what is willed

by God can also go beyond what was intended by the human author. This key truth follows from the underlying understanding of the nature of Revelation.

### **The Literal Sense of Scripture**

Revelation is essentially grounded in history because God revealed Himself through the events that made up the life of the people of Israel. Before the interpretations of those events were written down to become the Scriptures, the reality of revelation, God Himself, was mediated through events. In a very real sense, it is the facts, the events of Israel’s history, and in the New Testament, the fact of Christ and the events of His life, that are the vehicle of God’s self manifestation. Although the events, and their revelatory significance, are set down in writing, it is the case that the writing, the Scriptures do not, indeed cannot, exhaust the revelatory meaning of those events. As the author of the Gospel of John records at the end “there were many other things that Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

The first consequence that follows from this for our ministry of the Word is that it is important to know and be familiar with the history of Israel and the history of the life of Christ. The first meaning of the literal sense of Scripture is the actual history and the events that go to make that history. What makes that history a vehicle of revelation is that it was a history in which God participated, a history shaped by God’s action. The faith of Israel and the faith of the early Church was precisely



their recognition that the events were the clothing of God's self-revelation. To be in touch with God and his revelation means to be in touch with the events of salvation history.

An additional dimension is to be aware also of the place in history from which the original human author is viewing the events. This is particularly true of the Old Testament, since the place from which the author is writing reveals a perspective and an intention. To take the most extreme example, the author who put together the first chapters of Genesis, recounting Creation and the Fall, was probably writing

*The events of Israel's history, because they are events in which God participated, are charged with divine meaning. This meaning is not exhausted in the first telling*

in the context of the Exile – a time which is very late in Israel's history. Similarly, the authors of Deuteronomy and Chronicles are retelling the events of the Exodus and Sinai Covenant from a later perspective and in the light of later events.

The deeper truth at stake here is that the events of Israel's history, because they are events in which God participated, are charged with divine meaning. This meaning is not exhausted in the first telling. Later re-tellings in the light of later events bring forth further aspects of the divine meaning. All of this meaning contains revelation and puts us – the readers – in touch with the living Word of God.

The same truth applies to the Gospels. The events of Jesus' life and teaching are

also charged with divine meaning – with the self-revelation of the Second Person of the Trinity. The four Gospels, written by different authors, with different contexts and different perspectives, all contribute to the manifestation of the divine meaning with which the events are charged.

Ministers of the Word must therefore be steeped in the history of Israel and in a knowledge of the life of Christ (Pope Benedict's book "Jesus of Nazareth" also emphasises this point), and at the same time, must learn to see that history and those events of Jesus' life, through the eyes of the authors. The events, seen through those authors' eyes, are the means by which we today make contact with God's revelation. There is all the difference between a knowledge that takes us back into an event of the past – what the Catechism describes as "the letter that kills" or "a dead letter" and a knowledge that allows God, through those events and through those authors' eyes, to speak directly to us today. The minister of the Word must know and appreciate the difference between these two realities. He must become skilled and practiced in experiencing the living Word, not merely the dead letter, and must be practiced in opening this living Word for his hearers.

It is worth remembering too, especially with regard to the Old Testament, that much of the Scripture was known and experienced as revelation through its narration and proclamation in a cultic context. Readings of Israel's history became the occasion of renewed contact with the divine charge, the divine voice, in the context of liturgical celebrations – whether it was in the Temple, celebrations of the Passover and other Festivals. Such contexts make it clear that, far from being an attempt to go back into a past event, the narrations were to facilitate in the present the divine and living mystery which those past events contained. The minister of the

Word will remember that his narration of the Scriptures and his opening of the Scriptures for the people also take place in a liturgical context. The Liturgy is itself an event charged with the divine presence. The Liturgy is, first and foremost, God's own action today – an action in which God invites us to participate. It is God who initiates the Liturgy, not ourselves. We are servants within the Liturgy, not its masters.

### **The Unity of the Old and New Testaments**

The Catechism invites us all, and surely particularly invites ministers of the Word, to "be attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture" (CCC.112). Later paragraphs (CCC.128-130) amplify this sentence further and quote a saying of St Augustine – "the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New". These two sentences, no doubt familiar to us all, contain an extraordinary profundity, into which perhaps their very familiarity can sometimes prevent us from delving. Perhaps we

*It is God who initiates the Liturgy, not ourselves. We are servants within the Liturgy, not its masters*

pass over them thinking that we already understand that Jesus fulfils the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament is a type or a preparation for Christ.

Among modern authors, perhaps no-one has helped to unearth the depths of the

unity of the Old and New Testaments more than Henri de Lubac, especially in his masterful study *Medieval Exegesis*. Drawing upon the insights of countless Fathers of the Church and Medieval saints and scholars, de Lubac shows that the unity of the two Testaments is not just a simple fact of history – that Jesus fulfils prophecies of the Old Testament. Using Patristic and Medieval commentaries on such incidents from the Gospels as the Marriage Feast of Cana and the Transfiguration, he shows that the historical Fact of Jesus has a transforming, indeed transfiguring effect, upon the whole of the Old Testament. As many commentators declared, Jesus changes the water of the letter of the Old Testament into the wine of the Spirit. In his Gospel, Luke is the only evangelist to record that Moses and Elijah are also transfigured. The implication is that in the presence of Jesus, and because of the presence of Jesus, the whole Old Testament is transfigured. The events, the laws, the persons, the wisdom and the cultic sacrifices and festivals are transformed from the letter, which contain partial and progressive revelation of God, and which call for a response of faith and obedience to God, and become, in the transforming presence of Jesus, charged with a new and definitive significance. They all – events, laws, sacrifices, persons – become prophecy; they become prophecy of Jesus himself. As Jesus is revealed in the events of his life, he gives new meaning to everything in the Old Testament. At the Transfiguration Moses the law-giver becomes himself prophecy. Pope Benedict's book, *Jesus of Nazareth*,<sup>1</sup> begins with this very truth. Moses is a prophecy of Jesus in that he is the one who prefigures the One who knows God 'face to face'. Elijah the prophet, also becomes prophecy at the Transfiguration – prophecy which prefigures the One who will bring down the

1 London: Bloomsbury 2007.

divine fire from heaven. The discontinuity between Elijah and Jesus is that the divine fire that Elijah called down was a fire which consumed and destroyed, while the divine fire brought by Jesus is the fire of divine love and compassion (or “mercy” as it is described in the *Magnificat*). After the Transfiguration, the disciples invite Jesus to call down (Elijah’s?) fire from heaven upon the Samaritan town. Jesus refuses, then, a little later in the Gospel, speaks of the Good Samaritan who is ‘filled with compassion’.

**“The phrase ‘heart of Christ’ can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion ...”**

Thomas Aquinas

In paragraph 112 of the Catechism there is a very significant dual mention of the heart of Jesus, opened since his Passover or Passion. There is also a quote from St Thomas Aquinas’ *Exposition on the Psalms* (21:11) – “The phrase ‘heart of Christ’ can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion ...”. It is Jesus alone who opens up the obscure depths of the Old Testament. And this occurs at the time of His Passion. It would appear that there are two distinct elements here, as certainly Luke testifies. The first is Jesus transforming the Old Testament into prophecy (at the Transfiguration – or at least the Transfiguration reveals that a transformation has taken place). The second, again in Luke, is that, at the moment

of his death, the veil of the Temple is torn from top to bottom – the veil that separated sinful humanity from the presence of God. Once opened, Jesus passes through the veil into the Father’s presence – ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’. At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah have become united with Jesus, bound to Him as prophecy to fulfilment, so that when the disciples look up while on the mountain, they see ‘no one but ONLY JESUS’. In his death, as He passes through the veil into the Father’s presence, Jesus takes the Old Testament (Moses and Elijah) with him. Jesus has now definitively become the unity of the Old and New Testaments. The Old is now one with Him forever; its true meaning is now disclosed – its true meaning is to reveal Jesus. To put the cap on this, as it were, Luke finally recounts the incident on the road to Emmaus – AFTER the passion and resurrection. Now Jesus can explain to the disciples that the whole of the Scripture (the Old Testament) is referring to himself.

The minister of the Word must be one for whom this disclosure of the unity of the Old and New Testaments in Jesus has become a reality. We are not to be like those who read the Old Testament with a veil covering our minds – as Paul declares in 2 Cor 3. Rather, Paul says, ‘when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed’. For us too, in the Cross of Jesus, there is an opening of our minds and hearts. ‘And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord (*sic*. presumably as we read the Old Testament), are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another;’ (2 Cor 3:18). Like St Paul himself, our conversion is not simply a conversion to Jesus, but also a conversion to the spiritual reading of the Old Testament – to seeing Christ revealed in every page: ‘For this comes from the Lord, who is the spirit’ (2 Cor 3:18).

## The Senses of Scripture

The last of the twelve paragraphs in the Catechism (115-119) list and briefly describe the four senses of Scripture – the literal sense and the spiritual sense, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses.

We have spoken of the literal and the spiritual senses already. It remains for us to explore a little the subdivision of spiritual senses, for these too must be tools in the kit of the minister of the Word.

Once again, de Lubac’s great work is an invaluable resource for us. *Medieval Exegesis*<sup>2</sup> is now available in English translation, as is also de Lubac’s preliminary work *History and Spirit: the exegesis of Scripture according to Origen*<sup>3</sup>. Both works are rich in their exposition of the spiritual senses.

**The Allegorical Sense** – the Catechism says simply: ‘We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recog-

**‘We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognising their significance in Christ ...’**

nising their significance in Christ ...’. Beneath this simple sentence is a way of understanding the whole New Testament. For there is little in the New Testament – the Gospels, the Letters and the book of Revelation – that has not already taken up Old Testament themes, images, persons

and events, and interpreted them according to their Christological significance. At the heart of this process is the very mystery of the Cross. As Pope Benedict as remarked: how was it that anyone could interpret, what was at first seen only as a criminal’s death for the scandalous charge of blasphemy, in terms of the holiest event in Israel’s liturgy – the Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of sacrifice? His answer is that Jesus himself, notably at the Last Supper, gave his death this interpretation. His death turned the cult of the Temple into the shadow or type of the reality of Jesus’ passing through the veil. Throughout the New Testament, the authors have described the events of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in Old Testament terms, thus making the Old Testament into the allegory of the New.

Or rather, the literal sense of the New Testament is the allegorisation of the Old.

**The Moral Sense** – a key insight in de Lubac’s writings is that there are two levels of Moral Sense in the Scriptures – evident throughout the tradition of the Church. There is a simple level – related to the literal reading of Scripture. This is the simple moral virtue that we can find throughout the Bible incarnated in the various characters of Scripture: for example, the faith and obedience of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the humility of David, the fortitude of Joshua and the Judges, the wisdom of Solomon and Daniel etc. In the New Testament, all of the moral virtues are perfectly manifested in Jesus, and also seen in Mary and those commended by Jesus – the faith of Jairus, the friends of the paralytic etc. There is moral teaching also in the ten commandments and in the Prophetic and Wisdom

2 Edinburgh: T&T Clark 2000.

3 Henri de Lubac & Anne Eglund Nash. *History and Spirit: The exegesis of Scripture according to Origen* (San Francisco: Ignatius 2007).

Literature generally, as also in the teaching of Jesus and the New Testament letters.

But de Lubac identifies also what he calls a ‘mystical’ moral meaning. By this he means that by virtue of our being united to Christ by charity. The virtues prefigured in the Old Testament and perfectly present in Christ are being actualised again today within each Christian soul. This is not the result of moral exhortation, but of being conformed to the image and likeness of Christ himself. To reiterate Paul’s words: ‘we ... are being conformed to his likeness, from one degree of glory to another’ (Cor

### *The three senses can be summarised as building Faith (allegorical sense), Charity (Moral sense) and Hope (anagogical sense)*

3:18). It is a work of the Spirit to make a reality in us, those very realities, especially the virtues, which were first revealed in Israel and perfected in Jesus. Once again, the Liturgy is the primary location for this interior transformation.

**The Anagogical Sense** – this follows from what was said about the Moral Sense. The interiorisation of Christ’s virtues – a *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of idioms) between Christ and the individual soul – is a temporal project. We are gradually being conformed, day by day, as our lives progress. However, there is a sense also in which Christ himself is an image and a prefigurement of the *Totus Christus* in heaven. The *Totus Christus* is the whole Christ – head and members – as He shall come to be in the *parousia*. The Anagogical sense is also mystical, in that

our contemplation of Christ in Scripture (Old and New Testaments) lifts us into a glimpse of the heavenly reality – the whole Christ final and perfected. Many key themes of the Bible, especially Marriage and Bridal themes, Jerusalem, the Temple, the Promised Land, Israel and, of course, Christ Himself, become doorways – in the broadest sense, sacramental signs, of the heavenly reality, which is the goal for which we long and look for in hope.

The three senses can be summarised as building Faith (allegorical sense), Charity (Moral sense) and Hope (anagogical sense). It is not an exaggeration to say that the whole Tradition of the Church is nothing short of the unfolding of the four senses of Scripture throughout history. The framework that these few paragraphs of the Catechism provide for a minister of the Word is itself a *Diakonia* of immense value! ■

# Chaplaincy among seafarers: some stories

In this journal we are including articles about different forms of diaconal ministry which are carried out in the name of the Church, but not necessarily carried out by permanent deacons. Richard Withers has helped with and worked for the Apostleship of the Sea and is now a first year student for the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

The Apostleship of the Sea benefits immensely from the ministry of a number of deacons who visit seafarers onboard their vessels whilst in port. It is a ministry I would heartily recommend to those readers living within reach of a port. It’s a ministry to be encouraged too, for there is a shortage of personnel available to minister to seafarers. It is my hope that this item may be of some encouragement not least because seafarers, whilst having similar concerns to the rest of the human race have the added stress of separation from loved ones, family and church. There is a loneliness that can come about all too easily in the life of a seafarer and contact with somebody in the ministry can be a ‘lifeline’ ... a brief time of friendship with a stranger

### *There is a loneliness that can come about all too easily in the life of a seafarer and contact with somebody in the ministry can be a ‘lifeline*

who is trustworthy and endeavouring to be a witness to the Gospel.

Ministry among mariners has a long history and the seasoned sailor will spread the word among his younger contemporaries of the worth of missionaries; it is often the case that a missionary will be sought out soon after arrival in port.

Should your location and other considerations allow it, please *do* consider ministry among seafarers, the rewards will be great. For almost two years I enjoyed the immense privilege of chaplaincy in maritime ministry with the Apostleship of the Sea, which is an official agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales and in Scotland.

The Apostleship has an ecumenical partnership with the Mission to Seafarers who kindly share office accommodation and the use of mission chapels with AOS personnel. I was based in Newport, South Wales, and from here visited ships as far west as Swansea. A tremendous variety of vessels visit these docks. In terms of dimensions and crew numbers about 10% of the vessels I visited would weigh in at 200,000 to 250,000 tons. These vessels bring huge amounts of coal and iron ore to the deep water harbour at the Margam steel plant, Port Talbot – and would typically be manned by a crew of 25 souls. A third of the vessels are of between 45-55,000 tons and will be manned by up to 28 seafarers; while two thirds will be smaller vessels of between 6- 25,000 tons which require from seven to about 17 seafarers to operate safely. The South Wales region is placed forth in the U.K. for international crews – that is shipping that is other than European in port of origin. This means that one can expect a vessel from almost anywhere in the world. Crews are predominantly from China, Russia, the Philippines, Korea, Indonesia, Burma,



India, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Sri-Lanka and Iran ; there are very few British seafarers these days, the above mentioned nations can provide labour at far lower costs.

Cargoes and their origin vary tremendously: Coal imported from Brazil and Russia, iron ore from Goa and Canada; wood and steel products from as far as China, Russia

*I would make reference openly regarding God on first meeting with crew members, invoking a blessing to begin with. It wouldn't do for 'God's man on the dock', to miss an opportunity to witness!*

and Scandinavia; railway engines from North America; fertiliser from Egypt and containerized cargoes of anything at all from anywhere in the world! Rarely did I see the same vessel more than once and even then, should one come across the same vessel twice, it's not at all likely to be manned by the same personnel. Seafarers generally join ships at different times and places depending on the details of their individual employment contracts. It is rare that one finds a vessel manned by a crew entirely of the same nationality.

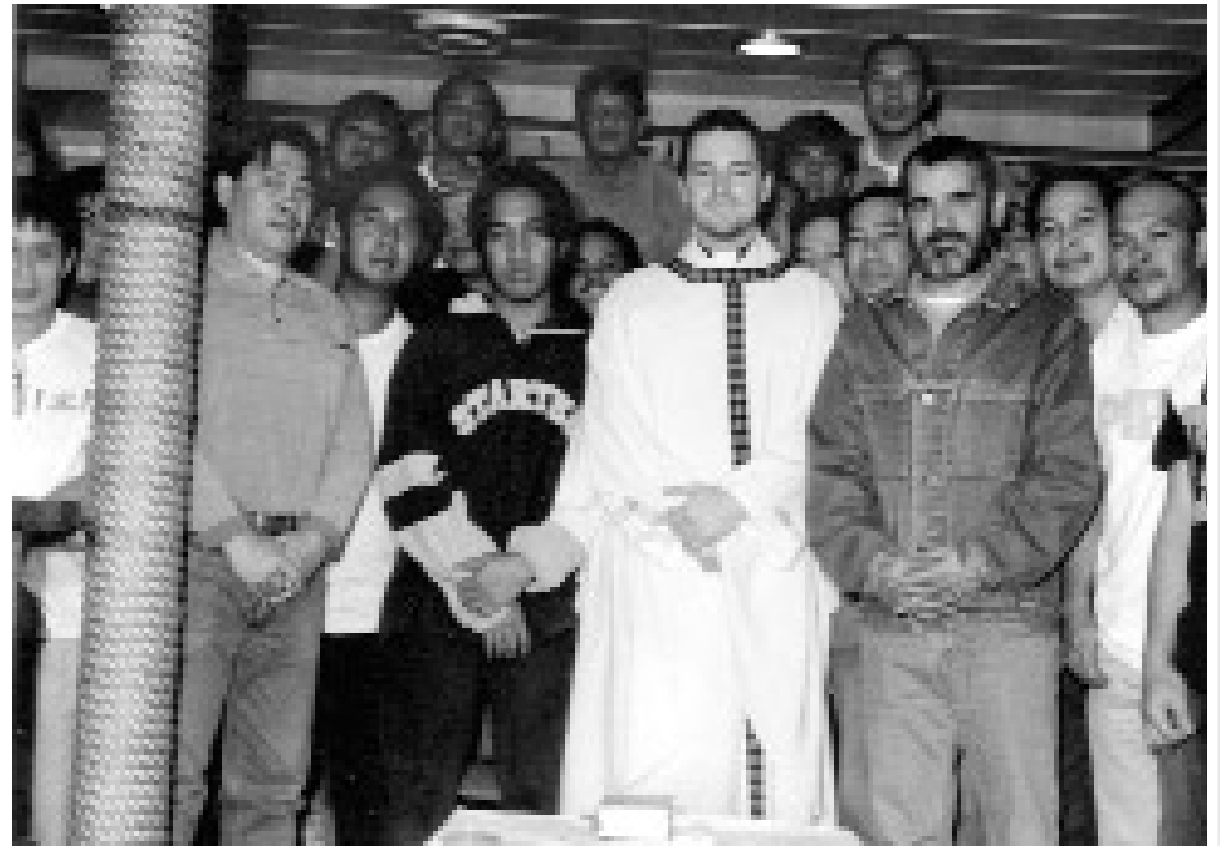
Newport is one of the ports on the global circumnavigation schedule of the Chinese / Polish joint venture shipping company named Chipolbok. Several times a year a ship of this company will visit Newport with a mix of general and containerised cargoes. Her previous ports of call will

have been New Orleans, Corpus Christi or Houston, having previously traversed the Panama Canal, called at a west (U.S.) coast port or two and originated in China. From Newport she will depart to Jeddah, then on to Dubai, Bombay, Singapore, Korea, Japan and finally reaching once again her port of origin in China... only to leave two days later to begin yet another circumnavigation. Twice around the world takes nine months. This is the typical length a contract for the average seafarer, who in the case of these vessels will be principally of Chinese or Polish origin; a good number of cadets are in evidence on board; these particular vessels provide for a uniquely varied training in seamanship ... general cargo vessels being seen as the toughest test of all for seafarers.

I made mention of the above voyage to draw attention to the particular needs of seafarers on different types of vessels. Container ships can load and unload very quickly. Thirty tons at a time is lifted on or off in a matter of minutes, while bulk cargoes are lifted off and onto a vessel in much smaller quantities in a similar time frame. Hence container vessels are in and out of port often within twelve hours. Depending on their shift some of the crew might have time to take a short walk on terra firma, whilst the other shifts will either be working or sleeping. Other types of vessels may spend days in port enabling the crew members to take more extended leisure time; an all too rare luxury in the life of a seafarer these days.

Since 9/11, America and Arabia have become 'closed' to visiting seafarers, they are seen as a security risk. Happily the U.K. hasn't taken this viewpoint and for seafarers particularly on these circumnavigation voyages, (with a U.S. port their last port of call and Jeddah, Arabia their next), Newport offers an opportunity to take a well deserved break. The vessels will extend their time here so that all the crew

Fr John Cole, currently parish priest in Tredegar (Cardiff Diocese) celebrating Mass on board a bulk carrier, in Newport dock



get a chance to go ashore and relax a little. Evening time provides a good time to visit crews, the stevedores are finished work, and the crews are at their most relaxed. One might well find oneself relaxing with them in the crews mess. Most of the officers on board speak some English, they need to in order to make their way up the professional ladder, and they are normally on hand and happy to interpret for the crew members who are not so familiar with the English language.

It is not unusual to be on board for an hour or two conversing with perhaps a dozen or so seafarers sharing a wide ranging conversation in an effort to learn of each others culture, political and governmental systems, standards of living, typical income, domestic expenditure, taxation, family life, education, leisure, pursuits...

all manner of details of particular interest. Many are happy to talk of God and are interested to hear of my faith. I would make reference openly regarding God on first meeting with crew members, invoking a blessing to begin with. It wouldn't do for 'God's man on the dock', (a reference once made by a certain fresh faced captain) to miss an opportunity to witness! Occasionally a Captain from the former Eastern Block will draw me aside to speak regarding how uncommon it is to hear somebody on his vessel speaking this way. Until quite recently of course, depending on which part of the USSR one lived in, you would have to practise your faith with the utmost care. Many a Russian sailor has shared with me how his great-grand-parents, grand-parents and parents had shared their faith with the younger members of their families. A Russian officer

once told me “They (politicians) can inform us of whatever they wish... but they don’t capture my heart.” As he spoke he reached into the neck of his jumper, revealing an item of religious significance.

It is not at all uncommon to have a Chinese crew member catch you up as you walk along the quay side on leaving his vessel (or later at the Seaman’s Club) seeking private time in order to witness to Christ openly; perhaps something he senses he is unable to do in conversation on board his vessel. Such an occurrence is likely to be a wonderfully gracious and joyous time for both seafarer and missionary. I keep some scripture in Chinese that I am able to share with such seafarers. (The reader is probably aware that there are great disparities across the provinces of China regarding religious freedom). On one occasion I came across a North Korean crew and was getting nowhere fast! (You can’t fault a man for trying)! So I visited the next ship along the quay. Having had time on this second vessel I had to drive past the Korean ship to exit the quay. As I was dri-

***Fr John agreed, of course, to the request to bless these souls. He stepped out onto the street and the seafarers immediately fell to their knees amidst the throng of Christmas shoppers***

ving four seamen attracted my attention as they were descending the accommodation ladder. I stopped and they ran over excitedly (I was momentarily confused) they spoke in good English as they voiced their relief at finding a missionary. They were Burmese Christians, one Catholic and three Baptists. They were serving a nine

month contract with this crew of atheists! Imagine their joy at having their first request granted; that was, to visit a church, meet a priest and receive a blessing. I’ll never forget that blessing. Our Parish Church is located in the centre of the shopping area of the city. It was a few days before Christmas, the church was closed so I knocked the presbytery door. To my relief Fr John answered, and agreed, of course, to the request to bless these souls. He stepped out onto the street and the seafarers immediately fell to their knees amidst the throng of Christmas shoppers. It made a moving scene for me, the stark comparison... a moment of the profoundly spiritual amidst the spectacularly secular. The memory of such occurrences are food for the soul in times of trial on the missionary trail.

Frequently seafarers will note prominent church spires as they approach port and when their time comes to spend some time ashore they will ask, “How do I get to the church on the hill?” One imagines they seek what we seek in a church; time with their God, in a building set aside for prayer, peace, tranquillity, restoration, rest ... and for some (depending on their faith) an opportunity to receive the Lord.

Incidentally, I have found that in a similar manner to most of *us* on holiday, seafarers with a love of God will seek out that God in the sacred spaces of the particular culture they happen to find themselves in. A common question is “Where’s the Icon?!”

I remember well five friends working together in an Iranian crew – on an Iranian vessel; they were cooks and stewards. They expressed a wish to do some sight seeing. Two of them spoke English well and it became apparent that they were serious Muslims. So we set off to visit a local Mosque. The weather was warm and fine so I headed for the rural splendour of the Wye valley. My companions

spotted Tintern Abbey and wished to explore and have the obligatory photographs taken. We drove on to Monmouth. As the sun began to set we walked over the ancient bridge with its stone arch and I drew their attention to the town cross which had been recently renovated. They took some photographs and then noticed the nearby church. They went on ahead to explore it whilst I studied the cross. Moments later I strolled over to the Church to find them sat in silence

***She was dressed in modern casual clothing: T-shirt and jeans with a small crucifix around her neck. She was a religious Sister with a chaplaincy role enquiring if anyone onboard, would wish to receive the Lord***

gazing at the architectural features and stained glass window beyond the sanctuary. They were tremendously grateful for the trip and indicated that they had been enriched spiritually. Rural splendour and sacred places ... such a contrast from a merchant ship which I compare with a factory, metal all around, the constant throbbing and humming of engines and generators accompanied by the often overwhelming characteristic odour of whatever cargo is in the hold. Seafaring has its difficulties on many different levels for the individuals concerned.

A particular Christian individual comes to mind whose habit it was to seek the Lord once his vessel was secured on a quay wall. His name was Roshan and he was a Catholic merchant captain from Sri Lanka. I met him in Swansea and he

wanted to share his witness to the Lord in his life. He began by explaining that whatever part of the world he had found himself in he had never in many years, failed to receive the Lord in Holy Communion. And Swansea proved no exception. He had made his way towards the nearest spire he could see, on the evening of his arrival. The first church was indeed a Catholic church, but the religious sister who answered the door that evening had to tell him that a priest was no longer in residence. She pointed him in the direction of the next nearest Catholic Church. After a few wrong turnings and enquiries as to the correct directions, he found himself knocking on the presbytery door of St David’s church in the centre of Swansea at a late hour. He prayed that the Lord would help him after having received no reply to his first knock on the door. After further knocking to no effect he reluctantly turned to leave only to see the Parish Priest behind him – he had been out walking. (Unknown to Roshan he could not have met a more generous and gracious individual in Swansea than Fr Luke Waring O.S.B.). Invited into the church Roshan knelt before the tabernacle and received the Lord (from the hand of a stranger and brother in the faith) in yet another far flung place. Once in Japan, where, as his vessel manoeuvred onto a quay, he imagined he’d never find a priest, he thought, *how could Our Lord be present for me here?* On tying up the agent boarded the ship and his first and extraordinary words to the captain were “There’s a young woman waiting for you on the quay!” Roshan was surprised to hear this, for he knew no one in Japan! The young woman was invited aboard; she was dressed in modern casual clothing: T-shirt and jeans with a small crucifix around her neck. She was a religious Sister with a chaplaincy role enquiring of Roshan if he, or anyone else onboard, would wish to receive the Lord! The following day a priest travelled by car some 50km to celebrate mass

onboard the vessel. Roshan needless to say, still praises the Lord for such lavish love and concern for him. Now and again we missionaries find such a treasure as Roshan who witness to *us* in turn and lift *us* up for the next part of our own journey.

Before he left South Wales (his final discharge was in Cardiff) a local priest, Fr George Areekhuzy (who incidentally has nephews serving as merchant mariners), was happy to consent to celebrating Mass onboard and to bless the ship at the request of the crew who had joined the vessel in China at the start of this voyage and contract.

I was greatly blessed in my ministry by the generosity of so many Religious, resourceful friends and parishioners. A religious sister of the congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy donated many an item of a religious nature and I was able to pass on to Roshan a sizable statue of Our Lady. Completion of his voyage was to be Lisbon, Portugal. (“Near enough to Fatima for a day trip,” I suggested). On his arrival

### *Perhaps unique to maritime chaplaincy is the literally ‘here today gone tomorrow’ nature of work with seafarers*

home he e-mailed me thanking me for the time we had spent together and the gifts given. He had made the trip to Fatima and was delighted to have collected a few souvenirs from the shrine.

I quote from his e-mail..... ‘Believe me

Richard, the Lord has been taking me on a journey that I never experienced in my life. I am learning to surrender myself to the Lord. I am learning to be God dependent rather than being self-sufficient.

My visit to the Fatima Shrine was an equal miracle to my visit to St David’s (Swansea). It’s a marvellous story for me. I keep telling my church friends and relations about it. They are overjoyed and surprised to hear. In short that visit was an icing on the cake. The final packing to the cake is still being done. That of course, is nothing but the book you gave me. It’s a gem! I can’t tell you how much I am enjoying it. I am carrying it in the car and reading in the night, in the afternoons and (excuse me for this), even in the toilet! At times it challenges me; at times it is ME in the book. It is a great book!’ His final paragraph reads, ‘Mother Mary’s statue that you gave me is on our dining table. It is a treasure for me. Believe me Richard, over the past years of my sailing, when I returned home, I used to purchase a bottle or two from the duty free shop for Christmas or Easter. It was a must, if not a ritual. This time my bag contained Mother Mary and all the items I purchased from Fatima shrine, not alcohol. What a difference, isn’t it?’

A powerful witness, isn’t it? One can’t help but feel humbled; such is the stuff of chaplaincy – ministry of all kinds no doubt. Perhaps unique to maritime chaplaincy is the literally ‘here today gone tomorrow’ nature of work with seafarers, and the possible brevity of contact with individual seafarers. There can be a clarity in brevity; a firm hand shake – a blessing, the gift of a miraculous medal or some other object of devotion... any combination of the above infact, maybe a trigger that causes a soul to soar heavenward.

For sure chaplaincy with seafarers is wonderfully rewarding; there are so many beautiful souls floating about on the oceans of the world, and likely just as many to be gained for God. I once lived in the Arabian Desert and I often recall the gentle answer to a somewhat naïve question I once asked of an old Bedouin as we sat cross legged on the ground, “Why do you live in such a place?” I said whilst sifting a handful of desert dust. He replied with a sage like glance and smile, “If you

### *Of course the diversity of faith among crew members is an essential element in the respect and care they show each other. In inter-faith dialogue agreement on the ‘One God’ is quickly voiced and exhibited often enough*

live close to nature you live close to God”. (Ask a garden lover and I imagine he/ she would say the same.) So I can see why so many seafarers question the sanity of a life spent day after day, year after year ploughing through seemingly endless seascapes, perhaps some are yet to fully acknowledge the challenging truth of their call to the sea— *when you live close to nature you live close to God*. They’ll shrug their shoulders and exclaim, “It’s in you; it’s in your blood”. I nod agreement...God is captivating. He created all. How could we not be captivated; enraptured by the work of His hand? Such an extravagant love lavished on us. How bewilderingly beautiful and strong, fragile and lovely it all is. Such yearning He generates in us, calling us in our restlessness to a ‘desert experience’ – our hearts’ desire, amid this world of distractions that we have fashioned.

‘Within such a relatively small, somewhat closed community how do you handle the arrival of a new crew member (perhaps he is relatively new to seafaring), and is found to be somewhat challenging?’ I put that question to Uri, a young Ukrainian chief officer. He explained that nothing need be done or said; they themselves know soon enough if they are going to enjoy the seafarer life or not and more often than not leave after the first trip. This is borne out in my experience of meeting with crews over the past couple of years. They ‘rub along’ generally very well in full knowledge of the multi-cultural nature of the environment; and among the many demands of the job most of them recognise the need to watch out for each other. I remember with fondness the friendships I witnessed among seafarers of different racial and cultural backgrounds. It is not uncommon to find for example, four nationalities among a crew of seven souls! Of course the diversity of faith among crew members is an essential element in the respect and care they show each other. In inter-faith dialogue agreement on the ‘One God’ is quickly voiced and exhibited often enough by the production of a small item of religious significance. I have not witnessed believers being challenged by non believers (who may well be in the minority among seafarers). On a dark night taking a shift at the helm or on watch far out in the ocean, with only the pale moon and the stars for company; or tossed in the massive seas driven by hurricane force winds propelling your vessel down the Pacific Coast of North America – how, one might question, can a seafarer not be acquainted with the mystery that is God...in all things... everywhere? I imagine a great deal of prayer – in – earnest takes place whilst at the helm! Many a seafarer must utter a word of thanksgiving on safe arrival at the next port of call. And I know from experience that many will seize the opportunity to participate in a time of prayer when a priest or missionary visits their vessel.

1 Brenan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-up and Burnt Out* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah, 2000)



From time to time when Catholics are among the crew I am able to take a priest to their vessel having made preparations for the celebration of Holy Mass in a designated area of the ship. When the priest arrives on board, word gets around and crew members introduce themselves indicating that they would like to participate. Whatever their faith they come and enter into a celebration of spiritual significance perhaps experiencing community with a new and deeper understanding. Mass in this context contains longer periods of silence in order that members of each faith may have time to peacefully recall prayers that they are familiar with from within their own traditions. The homily will focus on the One God, who is love and to whom we belong. He knows us intimately and calls us by name. It is He to whom we give the honour, praise and glory, and he waits for us and will welcome us when we leave this life, to be with Him in a new way.

At times in these peaceful moments on board I look around the faces of those I'm privileged to share a brief time with and not infrequently it occurs to me that this may be the last celebration these particular souls will participate in; for paradoxically the challenge of the unpredictable will be a feature of the life of those who chose to live so close to nature ... so close to God. Twenty-five lives and ten vessels are lost each month on the Oceans of the World. A grave statistic; the true cost of global sea trade in the 21st century.

It is not at all common that Mass is said on board merchant vessels. Recently a Captain told me it was probably ten years or more in his experience. Previously another Captain told me it had been two and a half years and that he couldn't remember what port it was in, but he could remember that it was in South Africa and in a Baptist Church! I frowned

quizzically and in response he shrugged a shoulder and said in a tired tone of resignation 'We get what we can'. Here in South Wales I have been particularly blessed with the friendship and kindness of many priests who have made time to travel to vessels in order to celebrate Mass, hear confessions and give priestly counsel when it has been required. It is a rare and great source of joy for a merchant mariner to meet with a priest who has come to celebrate in his 'home'.

A couple of final thoughts: a definition of Chaplaincy might have been more useful at the beginning of this script, however (better late than never). Here's one that I came across recently, for which I have to thank Paul R. King of the Methodist church: *Chaplaincy is a form of ministry which may be said to exist where one or more representatives of religious organisations are formally recognised in an institution or context beyond the normal ecclesiastical structures.* I like the simplicity; it sits well as a needful counter balance to what can sometimes seem a complex task.

*Chaplaincy is a form of ministry which may be said to exist where one or more representatives of religious organisations are formally recognised in an institution or context beyond the normal ecclesiastical structures*

Finally, a humorous tale from recent experience. The occasion was a lunch time meeting with a fellow chaplain of a different denomination. We were chatting generally and got on to the subject of the varying approaches one might adopt when boarding ships. We agreed that with so

many different nationalities and cultural norms to observe, it's not uncommon in moments of quiet reflection to find oneself laughing aloud at the gaffs and other extraordinary occurrences. Before I had chance to contribute my friend was almost moved to a state of collapse as he recalled some of his most recent comical moments. Amidst laughter I offered a few sentences of my own, which caught his imagination and off he went fantasising aloud, extrapolating regarding *my* approach. 'So it's similar to that of J.W.'s then, is it? You know, getting out ... knocking the doors' (in our case jumping on board) 'surprising complete strangers, most of whom gaze on you in utter disbelief as you venture into a brief series of split second assessments of interpersonal process regarding how best to proceed with this unsuspecting individual, who's fallen prey... and who's meagre grasp of English you are now exploiting to the point where you decide to abandon it completely in favour of the light hearted, good natured – Bon Homie! – BEAR-HUG approach, which you know... (an index finger stabs the air in my direction)... may have an alarming effect! Catch them of guard don't you?!' It is such moments as these that can help immensely for this quayside ministry can be a lonely furrow. Thankfully God doesn't only watch from a distance. He indwells ... in all of us, and all things. ■

I would like to recommend to you the ecumenical chaplaincy course at St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, near Durham. Email: [courses@ushaw.ac.uk](mailto:courses@ushaw.ac.uk) Finally of possible interest to those considering Chaplaincy within their working environment... Industrial Christian Fellowship is a national ecumenical membership organisation supporting and equipping God's people for their ministry and vocation in the world of work. [www.icf-online.org](http://www.icf-online.org) For further information on the Apostleship of the Sea go to [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk) or call 02075888285.

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# Where are we?

Where are we?

image to find

For a thousand years, the permanent diaconate had no place in the Latin Church. Undoubtedly, it is here that one must look for the principal reason for the theological deficit relative to the ministry until to dawn of Vatican II. It is, in fact, this most recent Council which decided the possibility that local churches should re-establish the permanent diaconate. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* 29b). The Fathers of the Council based their decision on certain theological statements which, subsequently, would clarify the restoration of this ministry and at the same time would develop the theological basis of the diaconate, especially its clear and firm sacramental status.<sup>1</sup> In the following pages, after recalling the pastoral usefulness which has accompanied the restoration of this ministry, I will present what, in my eyes, seems to be the theological gain which has come to us as a consequence of the sacramentality of the diaconate.

## Missionary concerns and pastoral needs

This is not the place to recall what led up, in the days preceding Vatican Council II, to the contingent necessity of restoring the diaconate as a permanent role. Everything had shifted, as we know, with the formidable preoccupations in Germany during World War II and, in France, at the end of that war. On the eve of the Council, among the ten preparatory Commissions three of them examined the possibility of restoring the diaconate. Two of them took under consideration the shortage of priests, the pressures on the latter, and the usefulness of some assistance with the work of evangeli-

This article is the first part of a paper written by Father Alphonse Borrás, who is Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Louvain and Vicar General of the diocese of Liège. It is a sequel to 'The Sacramentality of the Diaconal Ministry' by Father Didier Gonneaud which appeared in our first issue. The second part of this paper will appear in our next issue.

sation among non-Christians. But following the discussion of the central Commission, even if a small majority took account of the diaconate as a remedy for the shortage of priests, others accorded importance to the experiment of establishing a twofold clergy, the presence of married deacons, and, significantly, the problems which this would pose for a celibate priesthood. While speaking, at this stage, of establishing the diaconate, the Fathers of the Council were actually speaking of something quite different: in fact, about priestly celibacy. Could the Latin Church undertake the ordination of married deacons without putting priestly celibacy at risk?

The debates of the Council quickly centred on the schema of the Theological Commission whose 12th chapter touched on the permanent diaconate. This text was set out for discussion from the 4 October 1963. The diaconate would certainly complement the hierarchy, notably in the eyes of the German bishops, but it would have to be conferred on men already exercising diaconal functions with a view to helping priests, alongside the poor but also for pastoral needs, especially in *diaspora* circumstances. Reservations were maintained as

<sup>1</sup> I have no hesitation in noting, following Didier Gonneaud, that a sound logical doctrine centred on sacramentality will, however, be insufficient if it does not connect with a theology of real experience, an understanding of the community, an affinity of the order of diaconate with the theology of the local church, and a consideration of the relation of that church with the world. See D Gonneaud (2003) 'A lecture on the document of the International Theological Commission: The Diaconate: its evolution and perspectives' in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 125, pp.414-416.

regards a married diaconate. In this way some remedy was found for the shortage of priests and for stalling the haunting spectre of interfering with priestly celibacy, perhaps the first stage on the road to a married priesthood). In this way the Fathers confronted the two reasons for the establishment of the permanent diaconate: pastoral need and doctrinal rationale.<sup>2</sup>

The conciliar debates on the re-establishment of the diaconate were symptomatic of the tensions existing among the Council Fathers on their conceptions of the

***Some remedy was found for the shortage of priests and for stalling the haunting spectre of interfering with priestly celibacy, perhaps the first stage on the road to a married priesthood***

Church, and the way in which they should respond to the needs of evangelisation in 'the world of today'. "The restoration of the diaconate," wrote L Collimbert, "was one of the stumbling blocks among different

tendencies."<sup>3</sup> That should not surprise us in the least, for subsequent events and the reception of the conciliar decision to restore it made us see the appropriateness of the dossier in relation to other insights of Vatican II, sympathetic to changes already under way, perceived as 'signs of the times', a hope for the Kingdom already in hand, an eschatological perspective of history with the Church as the people of God in its womb, a sacrament of salvation, taking account of earthly realities, marked by the dignity of the baptised and the grandeur of their vocation, and their engagement at the centre of this world, Church and baptised anchored together in a triple function of prophecy, priesthood and kingship of Christ.

Faced with the danger of the debates of the Council getting bogged down on the *schema* on the Church, Cardinal L-J Suenens called for an indicative vote on 5 fundamental questions among which he had the foresight to insert one on the establishment of the married diaconate. This indicative vote was taken on 29 October 1963. It returned 1588 voices in favour of re-establishment of the married diaconate, from a total of 2120 voters. During the third session, a new text privileged the bond between the diaconate and the service of the bishop which it envis-

aged as being for celibate young men, reserving to the Pope permission to extend the ordination to married candidates. On the basis of this text of the 21 September 1964, votes were cast for the diaconate of the future, enshrined in No.29 of the Constitution on the Church: this description of the diaconate garnered 2055 out of a total of 2152 voters; the admission of married candidates of mature age was agreed by 1598 out of 2229 voters; the contingency of accepting young men without an obligation of celibacy was accepted by 1364 out of 2211 voters.

The promulgation, one year later, of the Decree on the missionary activity of the Church brought to light different

***Fathers of the Council viewed the ministry of permanent deacons as an aid to priests in the service of charity***

emphases on the tasks committed to permanent deacons: there is a move from the stress in section 29 of *LG* on the principal liturgical duties of the deacon – following from which are tasks of charity and administration – to an emphasis on duties connected to the preaching of the Word in the role of catechists, and, in the name of the parish priest and bishop, to duties of charity and works of welfare and care to underprivileged communities. These differences of emphasis reveal tensions which were present from the beginning of the discussions of reactivating the permanent diaconate. The impression which one comes

away with is of a diaconate directed to tasks which until that time were assumed by priests or catechists.

For the historian Daniel Moulinet, the text promulgated by *LG* 29 witnesses to hesitations and ambivalences among the Fathers of the Council: on the one side, the diaconate could appear to the eyes of some as a prelude to the advancement of married men to the priesthood; on the other, the question of its establishment stimulated some to re-evaluate priestly celibacy. It remains the case, however, that the Fathers of the Council viewed the ministry of permanent deacons as an aid to priests in the service of charity. Their decision, nevertheless, enshrined consequences for the future: these were to find their first expression in the *Motu Proprio Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*, of 18 June 1967.<sup>4</sup>

Forty years later, the International Theological Commission does not fail to note, at the same time as it identifies two distinct models – one as assistance to priests and the other as a diaconate of charity<sup>5</sup> – those tasks on which emphasis is placed as defining 'primacy of urgency in the life of the Church', (if one may use the expression of *LG* 29a). In the eyes of the Fathers of the Council, writes the aforementioned Commission, the duty for pastoral care of the faithful which makes up its different tasks, is 'the determining factor for the restoration of the permanent diaconate in the local Church.' (p.86) This pastoral usefulness, which is the highest priority is, definitively, 'the care of souls' (*cura animarum*), and it becomes the decisive element in the re-establishment of the diaconate.

2 40 years on, the International Theological Commission (ITC) has, rather, proposed 3 reasons: further to the two already given, it suggests "a confirmation, a re-enforcement, and a fuller incorporation into the ministry of the Church of those who *de facto* already exercise the ministry of deacons", without, however, seeing in this an architectural element creating "a more strict union between the sacred hierarchy and the worldly life of the baptised – this is, perhaps, the idea introduced in the proposal of this subject in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. See ITC 'The Diaconate. Evolution and Perspectives (2003), p.86. As regards the idea of a 'middle order', the ITC reckons that it has not been retained, but that it is reflected in the way forward indicated by *LG* 29: 'the text speaks of deacons at the end of Chapter II, in terms of a degree inferior to the hierarchy, just before raising in Ch.IV the theme of the laity.' In *Ad gentes* (AG) it reveals the same line of thought. The expression 'middle order' has been applied explicitly to the diaconate in the *Motu Proprio Ad pascendum*, 15th August 1972. Cf. ITC, 'The Diaconate' p.103, No.82.

3 Collombert, L (2001) 'The Re-establishment of the permanent diaconate. A look at its history,' in *Cahiers de l'Atelier*, No.491, p.40.

4 D Moulinet, 'La restauration conciliaire (1959-64)' forthcoming in Dumons, B & Moulinet, D (2007) *Le Diaconat Permanent. Quarante ans d'esperance francaise*. Paris: Ed. du Cerf.

5 See ITC, 'The Diaconate', pp.89-92. Personally I speak of two extremes in the large canvas of diaconal features: assistance to the priest (the deacon as a 'sub-parish priest'); and apostolic assistance (the deacon as 'super-lay person'). Cf. Borras, A (2007) *Le diaconat au risqué de sa nouveauté*. Bruxelles: Lessius.



## Deacons: “Ordained for ministry”

Consideration will be given, first of all, to the affirmation of Vatican II that deacons are “ordained not with a view to priesthood, but to ministry” (LG, 29a). Undoubtedly, there must be seen as integral to the maxim an attempt made by the conciliar Fathers to provide a definitive objective necessary to the restoration of the diaconate, namely “with a view to ministry, but without encroaching on what was already clear to Catholics, namely that *priests* who are bishops, and, according to their rank, other priests are ordained for priesthood.”<sup>6</sup>

Following Didier Gonneau, it may be asked if, in default of not having rethought “the priesthood through to its root in order

*The ‘diaconate’ of Christ cannot be reduced to services rendered, not even to a character for a function of service, nor a fortiori, to an exemplary moral disposition*

to unfold how it may be called a practical re-establishment of the diaconate” the Fathers of the Council did not see in their statement a doctrinal affirmation set to limit “the priesthood in order to create a place for ministry.”<sup>7</sup> Is this dual formula not a strategy of the conciliar Fathers to affirm with clearly indisputable authority that this was the least they could formulate on the originality of the diaconate, whose restoration they were envisaging? Does not the apparent clarity of this state-

ment have a function to involve rather than to explain, to move rather than to make it understood?

Ordination dedicates the baptised to the care of the ecclesial Body in its entirety, whose unity Christ assures through the Holy Spirit, which communicates the divine life. Flooded by Trinitarian love, the Church relies on the paschal mystery of Christ, who has loved us to the extreme. Such is the ‘diaconate’ of Christ in his humanity, that of the Son who has become through his filial obedience even unto death the *servant* of the Father (see *Hebrews*, 5:8-9; *Phil.* 2:7), and whose “origin of the gift of his life is the very person of the Spirit, who returns Him to the Father (*Hebrews* 9:14), because this same Spirit is at the origin of his incarnation (*Luke* 1:35).”<sup>8</sup> The ‘diaconate’ of Christ cannot be reduced to services rendered, not even to a *character* for a function of service, nor *a fortiori*, to an exemplary moral disposition; it is the fulfilment of his humanity given over in the act of his oblation. In signifying the initiative of grace, the apostolic ministry signifies at once the superabundance of the gift of the Son to the Father in the Spirit (the ‘diaconate’ of Christ) and the offering of His humanity turned towards the Father by his participation in the Easter mystery (the ‘priesthood’ of Christ).

This priestly mediation finds its significance, over against the community, by the bishop who, in the name of Christ and in the Spirit, presides to the edification of the Church, *in this place* and for the fashioning of the bond among the churches. For

this ‘ministry of the community’, *in this place*, the bishop is assisted by his priests and deacons. It is here that there arises a necessary interdependence of each of the two orders, presbyterate and diaconate, with the fullness of the sacrament resting in the episcopate.

From one point of view, in imitation of the bishop who presides over the local church (as its ‘head’) and locates it in the communion of churches (as the hinge), the ministry of priests images the sole and unique priestly mediation of Christ, the true pastor, the good shepherd *par excellence*. This priestly mediation summonses the whole Church and each of the faithful to make a spiritual sacrifice of their lives (that is, in the Spirit) acceptable to God (cf. *Romans* 12:1-2).

From another point of view, deacons are not ordained ‘with a view to priesthood, but with a view to ministry’ (LG, 29a): they are not ordained for presidency of the ecclesial community and its Eucharist. They are ordained ‘for ministry of the bishop’: not

*There arises a necessary interdependence of each of the two orders, presbyterate and diaconate, with the fullness of the sacrament resting in the episcopate*

for ministry which has the bishop as its *object*, but that ministry of which the bishop is the *subject*, the titular principal head, the author (*auctor*) in the sense of its guarantor. Now, this ministry has as its object the ecclesial community (cf. LG 20b) and may be accounted ‘apostolic’, since it wishes to safeguard and promote the ecclesial identity of the church, *in this place*.

## The triple diaconate

The apostolic ministry to the service of which deacons are ordained is, above all, that of which the bishop is in charge. They assist him and serve the people of God *in this place* by exercising their duties in three sectors or deaconries: the liturgy, the Word, and charitable work. Vatican II did not make use of the conceptualisation of *tria munera*, that is to say the threefold function of prophecy, priesthood and kingdom of Christ in His ecclesial body. Was it intending thereby to suggest a difference of structure between, on the one hand, the sacerdotal order of priests and bishops, and, on the other, the order of deacons?<sup>9</sup> For deacons, there is a question of a threefold diaconate, which function to give a tone indicating ‘in a general way, and through a brief but weighty expression’ the domain for the exercise of diaconate which, in line with the text of LG 29a, ‘is further specified by the *officia* of charity and administration.’<sup>10</sup> It is in this way that the conciliar Fathers, before they voted on the definitive text, clarified the meaning of the threefold diaconate.

6 As underlined by the ITC, explicit allusions of Vatican II to the diaconate do not employ ‘priest’ categories, but only those of ‘ministry’. SC 35d; LG 20c, 28a, 29a & 41d; OE 17; CD 15a; DV 25a;

AG 15i & 16f, in *ITC*, The Diaconat, p.101.

7 Gonneau, D (2004) “Pour le quarantenaire anniversaire du rétablissement de l’*ordo* diaconal: réflexions autour d’une maxime doctrinale”, in *NRT*, 126, pp.556-557.

8 I am pleased to refer to the theological work of A Grau (2001) ‘Diaconate of Christ: From practical analogy to the theological category’, in *Communio*, 26/2, pp.29-51; 48-49.

9 According to Jean-Francois Chiron, the last Council wanted to make a clear distinction, in its very statement, between the office of deacon and that of bishops and priests. Cf. Chiron, J-F ‘Diaconate and Ecclesiology’ in Dumons, B & Moulinet, D (eds) (forthcoming 2007) *Le Diaconat Permanent*. This corresponds also to the opinion of D Gonneau: *La Sacramentalité du ministre diaconal*, in *RTL*, 2005, 36, p.15 (translated in *The New Diaconal Review* 1 (2008) pp.4ff.)

10 In the *Synodal Acts of the Sacred Ecumenical Council of Vatican II*, Vol.III, 3<sup>rd</sup> Period, Part I, No.260 one can read: ‘the offices of deacons are outlined in a general fashion (*modo generali*) by a brief but weighty phrase, in a threefold domain of ‘service of the liturgy, of the Word, and of works of charity’, which one may then specify in more characteristic terms (*quod deinde magis specificantur*) as ‘through the offices of charity and administration.’

In the context of liturgy, deacons do not preside over the ecclesial congregation, but they do contribute to what the Christian assembly lives by their fuller participation in the liturgy in order thus to make their life a sacrifice agreeable to God. One should not be surprised, then, that they have, in certain ways, a role as animators of prayer of the faithful, after the model of deacons in the oriental Church. Concretely, in the Eucharistic service, they remind the community that there is no Eucharist without the washing of the feet. This, then, is the liturgical diaconate's way of safeguarding, along with the bishop, the authenticity of the Eucharistic worship of Christians.

In the context of preaching the Word, deacons are connected to several forms of *ministry* of the Word: public reading of the Scriptures, and especially the proclamation of the Gospel; catechesis; encouraging the faithful; comforting afflicted people of all kinds; preaching, and particularly giving the homily, and so on.<sup>11</sup> The 1983 Latin *Code of Canon Law* says that it belongs to

## *Deacons have a further obligation to witness to Christian charity flowing from the gift of Christ's love for humanity*

deacons to be at the service of the people of God by the ministry of the Word, in community with the bishop and his presbyterate. (Canon 737) Whatever about regional and temporal variations, deacons assume the diaconate of the Word in order to safeguard its apostolic integrity, and to enliven, by their example and zeal, the authentic Gospel and witness of the community of the faithful, who may recall, thanks to them, that Christ has come in order to serve and not to be served, that is to say, to give his life for the multitude. (*Mark* 10:45)

Deacons also have a particular role in catechesis. In virtue of their ordination they are, along with other ordained ministers, guardians of the apostolicity of the faith which they profess in their guardianship of the quality of their teaching and their contribution to the liturgy, as well as in their personal lives and their charitable works in society. In catechesis, deacons will have heartfelt concern to encourage others who have a catechetical role; they will develop their competence and commitment, so as to focus their action by directing it to the principal Sunday liturgy and to their daily witness to the Gospel.

As regard the diaconate of charity, which belong, in the first instance, to the bishop, deacons will exercise it in a way that will secure its Christ-like value. They are not simply social workers: solidarity with the poor is not of itself exclusive to Christians. It is a moral duty upon all people. Deacons have a further obligation to witness to

*Christian* charity flowing from the gift of Christ's love for humanity. This love of Christ for us as part of the Father's love transfigures our love, our solidarity with others, our concern for others in need. To guard the apostolic identity of the deacon's charity, is to witness to Christ the Servant who gave his life for his friends. (*John* 15:13-15)

In this way, by the evangelical quality of the exercise of their tasks, deacons will encourage their brothers and sisters in the faith to take the Gospel seriously. By their experience as partners and in family life, they represent the quasi-totality of deacons, and by their professional standing and connected social relations, deacons are at a crossroads of life, where they become objects of attention by reason of their pastoral authority. The ministry of deacons, by its embeddedness in daily life, is

## *The ministry of deacons, by its embeddedness in daily life, is positioned in such a way as to contribute to the enculturation of the faith*

positioned in such a way as to contribute to the enculturation of the faith. They officially carry an immediacy of witness to the Gospel; and they create an opportunity for those who go about their daily affairs to question the Gospel and to liberate, 'in the activity of daily living', the charge of hope.<sup>12</sup>

Within this perspective, their liturgical role of receiving the offerings of the faithful for the celebration of Mass (the 'offertories') and the sharing with the poor (which has become known as 'the collection') recall the unbreakable bond between the sacrament at the altar and the sacrament of brotherhood. It is in this way that deacons serve "the mysteries of Christ and of the Church", according to the lovely formula of Ignatius of Antioch repeated by Vatican II.<sup>13</sup> Their contribution to the apostolic ministry exists within the Eucharist, where Christ makes his Church present in the Easter mystery as celebrated in truth. Indeed, this is a matter of a duty for each baptised person, but deacons – though in first place the bishop and, following him, the presbyterate – are charged with safeguarding it.

### **The supremacy of service**

In communion with their bishop and the presbyterate, deacons serve the apostolic identity through this threefold diaconate. This last word translates exactly the 'dominance of service' for deacons.<sup>14</sup> This might suggest a difference, namely, of

11 This diaconate of the Word has taken different forms in history: it is clear that in the pre-Nicaean Church, where the community came together once a week, on the Sunday, for the Eucharist, around the Communion table and with the presidency of the bishop, it was the bishop and not the deacon who delivered the homily. The deacon's role was to lead the faithful in prayer. In the Merovingian period, when, in rural communities to whom the bishop had not yet been able to send a priest whose upkeep was the responsibility of the local landlord, a deacon would assume the role of prayer-animator of the Christian body: he would deliver the homily and proclaim the Gospel, or, more precisely, he would read on most occasions a commentary by the Patristic Fathers.

12 As H Legrand has emphasised, the restoration of the diaconate opens up the possibility of better articulation between the social spaces and ecclesiastical space: 'deacons are positioned to make the life of the Church more familiar to many people and, above all, to draw on their experience and cultural capital so as to be able to reject the effects of general de-clericalisation on the ministry of the Word, on the way of celebrating baptisms and marriages, and on the process of decision-making within the Churches.' Cf Legrand, H 'Bulletin of Ecclesiology: The diaconate: renewal and theology', in *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 1985, No.69, p.102.

13 *Lumen Gentium* 41d: 'At the mission and grace of the Sovereign Priest ministers of a lower order participate in a special way, and first of all deacons, who should, in serving the mysteries of Christ and his Church, keep themselves pure from all vice, seek to please God and be to the people instruments of every possible good.. Cf *Timothy* 3:8-10; 12-13.

underlining a discontinuity in the triple charge of pastors and the threefold duty of deacons. The *tria munera* Of priesthood) does not exactly replicate the triple diaconate. As regards the difference of pastors – bishops and priest – who exercise conjointly the *tria munera* with the authority of Christ (the three functions, that is, of prophecy, priesthood and kingship – to teach, sanctify and govern) deacons will fulfil quite separately one or other of the *tria munera*.<sup>15</sup>

*“the inclusion of a long list of liturgical tasks, between the general characterisation of the diaconate and its specific description, is not part of the doctrine which Vatican II intended to teach concerning the specific theology of diaconate.”*

There remains, then, the tasks through which this triple diaconate is made explicit: Vatican Council II has given us two lists (LG29a & AG 16f). LG enumerates first of all nine liturgical tasks of which two come directly from the context of the Word, and then there follows a reference to ‘the duties of charity and administration’. (LG 29a) H Legrand helps greatly in the clarification of this text. Basing himself on the written *relatio* presented to the Council in clarification of this passage of *Lumen gentium*, he discovers that before the vote the threefold diaconate is viewed as a general way of presenting the duties of deacons, which is then made specific in a more characteristic fashion as ‘duties of charity and administration’. “According to the will of the Fathers of the Council”, writes H Legrand, “the inclusion of a long list of liturgical tasks, between the general characterisation of the diaconate and its specific description, is not part of the doctrine which Vatican II intended to teach concerning the

14 B Sesboue, ‘What constitutes the ministerial identity of the deacon?’ in Dore, J (ed) (1999) *L’Eglise a venir: Melanges offerts a J Hoffmann*. Paris: Ed. du Cerf, p.245. Zulehner, P M (2003) *Dienende Manner: Anstifter zur Solidaritat Diakone in Westeuropa*. Ostfildern. More recently, by the same author, ‘Dienende mannen: Diakens in Kerk en wereld vandaag’, in J Van der Vioet & R Vandebroek (eds) (2006) *Het Prmanent Diocanaat op zoel naar zichzelf: 35 jaar diakens in Vlaanderen*. Anvers, Haalewijn, coll.: ‘Cahiers voor praktishce theologie’, No.6, pp.59-77.

15 Cf. D Gonneaud, ‘Pour le quarantieme anniversaire...’ in *NRT*, 2004, No.126, pp.555-566. According to this author, the participation in the *tria munera* of Christ would not imply in the case of deacons the strict or necessary operation conjointly. Neither does it imply, according to me, their separation. It is the articulation of them that is at issue. Deacons need not exercise them in every case in unity with their pastoral charge which, in the case of the priesthood, bishops and priests, is determined by the *munus regendi* (duty of ruling), which is itself inseparable from the *munus sanctificandi* (duty of sanctifying), which, in turn, presupposes the *munus docendi* (duty of teaching) for the “building up of he Body of Christ” in ‘ordering’ or in disposing the community in obedience to the Lord who presides over it.” Gagey, H-J, Dore, J & Medievielle, G ‘To cultivate a plurality of modes of participation in the life of the Church’, in Dore, J & Vidal, M (eds) (2001) *Ministres pour l’Eglise*. Paris: Bayard-Centurion-Fleurus-Mame-Ed. du Cerf., coll. ‘Documents de l’Eglise, pp.213-215. These authors underline the ecclesiality of the sacraments which belong in an intrinsic way to the acts of government. They conclude in their writing: ‘Because in the sacrament, it is a matter of the Church as the Body and of the faith as an aggregate and a participation in the life of the Body, there is an intimate connection between ministry and government (*munus regendi*) and the ministry of sanctification (*munus sanctificandi*), (p.215).

specific theology of diaconate.”<sup>16</sup>

The tasks or the ‘duties of charity and administration’ determine the threefold diaconate. Principle to the role of deacons is the diaconate of charity which colours the diaconate of the Word and of the liturgy. In other words, in their contribution to the apostolic ministry of which the bishop, as the supreme head, has charge, deacons attest to the evangelical identity by showing, in their following o Christ the Servant, that charity will not pass away. (See I Corinthians 13:8)

### **The sacramentality of the diaconate: central to the Sacrament of Orders**

The ordained ministry, which includes deacons, comprises an assembly of tasks to be carried out for the benefit of the ecclesial community. In the eyes of many in the modern culture it is difficult to grasp the difference between what ‘makes’ a deacon and those main functions carried out by a lay person. One keeps coming back to the classic theme of powers (*potestates*) to which the modern mentality with its sensitivity to efficiency, efficacy and performance accords a new importance: what can a

deacon do that cannot be done by a lay person?<sup>17</sup>

By the imposition of hands accompanied by an *epiclesis* and a prayer of consecration, baptised candidates are invested with a ministry by ‘an ordination’. The sacrament of orders is tied to institution by Christ, witnessed to and handed down by the apostles. Through this sacrament, the baptised are placed by the Church, and by reason of choice, and at the bidding of the Twelve by Christ at the same time as they are empowered by the grace of service to the Church, with the authority of Christ and gathering of the Holy Spirit.

*The sacrament of orders is tied to institution by Christ, witnessed to and handed down by the apostles*

In the succession deriving from the Apostles, the bishops – and their collaborators in the ministry of the Church – do not

16 H Legrand, ‘The Diaconate in its relation to the theology of the Church and of its ministers. Reception and future of the diaconate since Vatican II’, in Haquin, A & Weber, P (eds) (1997) *Diakoniat XXI siecle. Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve* (1994). Bruxelles: *Lumen Vitae*/Paris: Cerf, p.10, making reference to *Acta synodalia Vatican II*, Vol.III, per.III, pars.I, pp.260-261. The author adds: ‘The letter G of the *relatio* confirms that there are here empirical examples taken from the strength of law and the witness of history in which authority reserves to itself the possibility of modifying, restricting or amplifying the type of tasks given as examples and not as expressing the essence of diaconate.’ (p.10)

17 Curiously enough, the cultural context accords a renewal of interest to this question of *potestates* integral to the sacrament of orders. It is easy to understand now the wise reflections of the International Theological Commission: “Without doubt there is a too-restricted approach which reduces the sacramentality to the question of *potestates*.” (‘Le Diaconat’, p.83) But one may not omit the question of the capacity of deacons for tasks by virtue of sacramentality. Does that capacity reside in the *how* of the exercise of the obligations (*munera*) or in the personal qualities of the one who carries them out? “If, in fact”, writes the ITC, “these functions can be exercised by a lay person, how do we justify that their source may lie in a new and distinct sacramental ordination?” (*Ibid.*).



create the apostolicity of faith; they receive it from the Church, they testify to it, they guarantee it. This ministry of testimony of the apostolic faith is transmitted through the sacrament of orders, which validates the apostolicity of the ministry; the bishops receive the ‘ministry of the community’ in order to exercise it with the help of the presbyterium and the deacons. (cf. *LG* 20b).<sup>18</sup> The diaconate is, since then, the ‘sacrament of the apostolic ministry’ (CEC, No.1536). It has an integral part to play in the ministry of the apostolic succession: deacons participate in their particular way (*suo modo*) in the mission of the apostles and their successors as received from Christ.<sup>19</sup>

It is by means of this apostolic ministry that, by his Spirit, the Risen Christ builds his Church. Vatican II proposes, with a felicitous formula, that those who have received the Sacrament of Orders are “instituted to nurture the Church, in the name of Christ, by the Word and the grace of God.” (*LG*, 11b).

In order to serve the work of God who reveals himself and the apostolic faith to which he witnesses, the deacons, like all other ordained ministers, have been invested by the sacrament which takes over their whole life for the duration of their days, and in an irreversible manner – the gift of God is not made for repentance – in order to set the Church in a state of mission. The Sacrament of Orders confers the grace proper to each one for the ser-

vice of the Church, with the authority of Christ who is Head of the ecclesial Body, which he calls together in the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel and the Sacraments.

Ministers of this unique priestly mediation of Christ, the bishop and priests, represent the free gift of God to his people and the offering of the latter in return – thanks to the sacrifice of Christ. Ministers of the ‘diaconate of Christ’ who came not to be served but to serve’ (Mark 10:45), these deacons are a sign of the diaconal vocation of the whole Church, which is his Body,

***Deacons are a sign of the diaconal vocation of the whole Church, which is his Body, and they witnesses, in their way, to the authenticity of the Eucharist, which their vocation celebrates***

and they witnesses, in their way, to the authenticity of the Eucharist, which their vocation celebrates. ■

*Translated by Frank McHugh, Research Fellow at St Mary’s University College, Twickenham. The full paper was originally published in the **Révue Théologique de Louvain** 38 (2007), pp. 3ff. and this translation appears with the permission of the editorial team and the author.*

<sup>18</sup>No more than the Council of Trent (see Session 23, *De Sacr. Ordinis*, Chs. 1 & 2 [DS1764-1765] and Canon 6 [1776]) does Vatican II enter into particular consideration of the institution of *each* degree of the Sacrament of Orders: it contented itself with saying that “Christ the Lord, in order to nurture the People of God and to give them continual growth, instituted in his Church a variety of ministries which work for the good of the entire Body” (*LG* 18a). A little later in the same Constitution, while speaking of priests, it adds: “thus, the ecclesial ministry divinely instituted is exercised at different levels by those who, since ancient times, are called bishops, priests, deacons.” *LG* 28a, quoting the Council of Trent. *DS*, 1765 & 1776.

<sup>19</sup>ITC, *The Diaconate* p.102.

# A German Catholic view of Diaconate and Diakonia

Here ???

## **Diakonie: Grundlagen für soziale Arbeit der Kirche**

**Author: Herbert Haslinger**

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Herbert Haslinger is a professor of Pastoral Theology in the Catholic Faculty at the University of Paderborn and has compiled a formidable ‘handbook’ on what German theology calls ‘*Diakonie*’. In German theology and church life *Diakonie* is quite simply, in the author’s phrase, ‘social work’ (p. 9). Thus *Diakonie* is not itself a designation of the diaconate (*Diakonat* in German) but in German theology – in Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Reformed circles – the term is widely understood to designate the essential nature and role of the diaconate. Given the vast scope of the study, the following comments will focus on intersections between *Diakonie*, the diaconate, and the ancient Greek term *diakonia* which underlies the two preceding terms, *Diakonie* and ‘diaconate’. Here, I believe, we are confronted with significant issues affecting how we are to proceed with developing a viable theology for the modern diaconate.

Haslinger writes within the German Roman Catholic tradition. To call his volume a ‘handbook’ is to borrow a common German designation for such compilations. These are not mere itemisations of information but comprise a comprehensive series of expositions on aspects of the theme and incorporate dialogue with leading scholarship. In this case the author has presented us with over 400 pages of text in two columns across a large-page format – surely the equivalent of your regular 800-

page book – with a bibliography of some 750 items.

To facilitate closer familiarity with this impressive study those who have read about the permanent diaconate only as it exists in English-speaking countries – diverse as its operations may be even there – need to be aware of the special place German initiative holds in the diaconate of the post-Vatican II era and of certain strong features in its profile. Significant early French influences to one side, the German drive for a permanent married diaconate was the major force leading to the call at Vatican II for a restoration – Germans prefer to say ‘renewal’ – of the ancient diaconate.

## **The German initiative**

In this the main inspirational figure was Hannes Kramer (1929-2001), himself already a social worker, who drew many insights from the pre-existing German Lutheran or Evangelical diaconate that had developed from the middle of the 19th century and was dedicated to works of social welfare. What interested Kramer was not the institutional character of the Lutheran diaconate – still centred at his time on communities of deaconesses and ‘brothers’ – but its underlying theology of loving Christian service to those in need.

To this ideal – which was to be shared by the whole membership of the church and not just by the deaconesses and brothers – the Lutherans had given the German name *Diakonie*, deliberately evoking through this name values that they associated with the diaconate of the early church and, in particular, with the Greek word from the New Testament, *diakonia*. In fact, the title ‘dea-

con' also took its rise in German (*Diakon/issa*) – as in all European languages – from the same source.

What is noteworthy about this – and, indeed, critical to this book and the contemporary debates about the diaconate – is that *diakonia* was understood to mean 'lowly, loving service to those in need after the manner of Jesus "who came not to be served but to serve..."' (see Mark 10:45, where 'serve' translates a *diakon-* word). It so happened that in the 1930s the deacon movement was powerfully supported in locating its theological foundation in this concept by the fact that scholarly opinion of the highest order, in the form of the Gerhard Kittel *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, embraced the same estimation of *diakonia*, thus endowing the term *diakonia* not only with respectability but with far-reaching theological significance.

In this light, Haslinger's title, *Diakonie*, itself already says a lot about the book for its German readership. Readers will recognise the notion of Christian social welfare conveyed by the term – and made explicit in the subtitle 'Foundations for the Social Work of the Church' – but will also see connections with the historic churchwide Lutheran 'Diakonic Work' (*Diakonisches Werk*), with the various institutions of Lutheran deaconesses and deacons, and, because of the book's clear Catholic provenance, will be prepared for some engagement with the Catholic permanent diaconate.

### **Diakonia and caritas**

In fact, German Catholics may find Haslinger's title eye-catching because since 1945 the Catholic German bishops have used a different logo to promote 'loving service to those in need'. This has been *Caritas*, the name of the social welfare arm of the Catholic German Bishops Conference. In the demanding situations



arising from the end of the Second World War, and within a rather competitive environment of which church did what to meet the emergent social crises, *Caritas* (a Latin word for 'charity') gave the Catholics a recognisable and attractive logo for their endeavours, one which also served the purpose of distinguishing their endeavour from the *Diakonie* of the Evangelical State Churches of the Lutherans.

In that pre-ecumenical era, of course, the Catholics did not yet have a permanent diaconate so that a call for *caritas* in the name of *Diakonie* would have had much less appeal. Through frequent public invocation of 'faith, hope, and charity', however, Catholics were well aware of 'charity' as one of the foundational requirements of being a Christian. As the post-war decades unfolded, and German wealth was restored, both Evangelical and Catholic Churches adopted increasingly professional standards in the application of generous fundings to meet needs in their own territories, in Eastern Europe, and overseas in emerging post-colonial situations. In the course of these impressive operations, however, the two churches flew the flags of – and wrote their cheques under the names of – either

*Diakonie* or *Caritas*. Within the one university, similarly, qualifications for participation in *Diakonie* or *Caritas* are on offer through courses of study at separate Protestant and Roman Catholic faculties so named.

From Haslinger's point of view, the choice is moot. Either term would do; in fact, for him, the terms are interchangeable. Thus he writes of 'love/*caritas*' in relation to *Diakonie* (p. 346):

This is a term that is closely associated with the implementation of *Diakonie*. So closely associated, in fact, that in its Latin form *caritas* it also serves as a comprehensive designation for the whole complex of social work that is undertaken for Christian motives.

Nonetheless, in addressing his options in his opening discussions (pp. 15-19), Haslinger decided on a shift to *Diakonie*. This stands as a singular endorsement of the conventional German understanding of the Greek *diakonia* at the very time when the legitimacy of that understanding was being seriously questioned, especially in Lutheran scholarly circles associated with the *Diakonisches Werk*, the national body responsible for the implementation of *Diakonie*.

### **Questioning the legitimacy of Diakonie**

The legitimacy of *Diakonie* as a notion representing values expressed by *diakonia* in the early Christian Greek tradition had first been raised in Germany in 2000 by Hans-Jürgen Benedict in the Göttingen journal *Pastoraltheologie* under the title (to translate), 'Do the Evangelical Church's claims for *Diakonie* rest on a misinterpretation of the sources?' This charge of a misinterpretation – strongly pursued by Benedict – arises from Benedict's concurrence with views argued ten years previously in my linguistic investigation *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the*

*Ancient Sources* (1990). One main outcome of the investigation had been that in ancient times the Greek *diakon-* words never expressed notions to do with loving help of those in need. This outcome was taken up that same year in F. W. Danker's third English-language edition of Bauer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (known as BDAG, 2000).

One year earlier in the first volume of the ANDREP studies of the diaconate (Anglo-Nordic Diaconal Research Project) Sven-Erik Brodd, one of the leading voices in the contemporary debate, concluded his survey of 'The Deacon in the Church of Sweden' with reference to the problematical situation presented by the fact that a 'concentration on the charitable task of the deacon has been shown not to be in accordance with the New Testament and the Early Church' (p. 137). And he predicted there, 'It seems reasonable to expect that this will be the focus of future debates'. In fact, a year later, in the second ANDREP volume, Brodd broached the debate in extensive considerations of '*Caritas* and *Diakonia* as Perspectives on the Diaconate'; he wrote on the basis that '*caritas* and charity on the one hand, and *diakonia* and diaconal work on the other, are not synonymous' (p. 63). Accordingly, he rejected the German model of the diaconate founded 150 years previously on the notion of *Diakonie* (p. 64).

It is true that some critiques have questioned aspects of the re-interpretation of *diakonia*, perhaps principally the critique by Ismo Dunderberg in his contribution to *Diakonische Konturen* (2003, under a title translated as 'Mediation instead of Charitable Activity?'). These critiques are along lines that cannot be followed up here. Nonetheless, a major new work of 2007 by Anni Hentschel, *Diakonia im Neuen Testament*, would seem to have brought the debate to a definitive end. Quite apart from summarily dismissing the critiques offered in *Diakonische Konturen* (p. 21), Hentschel's



work is important on the ground that it is only the second extended and detailed semantic examination of *diakonia* in ancient Greek sources since 1935, the date of the Kittel *Theological Dictionary*. Manuel Guerra ('Diáconos helénicos y bíblicos', 1965) covered limited ground, and virtually all other comments simply mirror the views in Kittel. Against this background we can say that Hentschel has presented us with a remarkable scholarly congruence with the semantic outcomes of my 1990 volume.

At the same time we need to be aware that Hentschel was not addressing directly issues attending the modern diaconate. Her focus was strictly exegetical in regard to how *diakonia* functioned semantically. In two subsequent publications, however, Hentschel has spelt out what she sees as the implications of her study for a diaconate constructed on the notion of *Diakonie*. Concluding her contribution to a collection of non-technical essays (*Diakoniefibel* 2008: 20) she put together the following rather diplomatic words (my translation):

In the 19th century the offices of deaconess and deacon were founded on a new notion named *Diakonie*. However, this notion has much less to do with Greek terms in the Bible than people thought. If we look at the development from a scholarly biblical perspective we find certain errors of interpretation. At the same time we can admit a positive element to these misunderstandings in that they strengthened the emphasis on love of neighbour. In spite of this, the idea that *Diakonie* demanded of its practitioners a kind of humility stemming from submission and self-abnegation is far from the meaning of any biblical text.

In an academic paper summarising the implications that her linguistic investigation carries for our understanding of the modern

diaconate (*Pastoraltheologie* 97.9/2008: 290-306) Hentschel wrote under the title (her translation), 'Do We Find a Caritative Deaconry among the Early Christians?' Her response was an emphatic negative.

### Haslinger's rebuttal

In the light of such recent developments, the timing of Haslinger's option for *Diakonie* would appear to be unfortunate. Nonetheless, the option was taken in face of alternative opinions arising from a reconsideration of the ancient Greek sources by Benedict, BDAG, Hentschel and myself. These opinions add up to the fact that *Diakonie* is a 150-year old misnomer. The term has now surely run its course. In Haslinger's presentation, nonetheless, values attaching to *Diakonie* pass like a thread through the long discussion of Christian social welfare and of the story of the diaconate; at certain phases the values are woven into full-bodied statements of the essential character of the permanent diaconate (pp. 178-81; 348-50). Indeed, from the beginning Haslinger insists on claiming an essential link between the *Diakonie* of the modern German diaconate and the meaning of the original Greek term *diakonia*. He writes (p. 17, my translation):

Without question the term *diakonia* is to be translated as 'service' ['Dienst', with reference here to the Kittel *Theological Dictionary*] ... stemming from an original meaning of the profane Greek verb 'to wait on tables'. From this developed a broad understanding of service in the sense of availability for or activity in relation to the daily needs of others; in addition this activity is mainly thought of as carried out with a particular attitude of humility... In the New Testament *diakonia* expresses the essence of Christian faith so clearly that the term often serves as a code word for the principle of Christian existence.

This determination provides the basis for the book's protracted review of the history, theology and praxis of *Diakonie*. At this early juncture, however, Haslinger points the reader to a much later section of the book (pp. 347-50) for an evaluation of my different views on *diakonia*.

The literature he cites there includes Benedict and Hentschel as well as myself, and the discussion proceeds under the heading "Agency"[*Vermittlung*] instead of 'Service'?' After noting some leading features of the semantic range of *diakonia* in my description – especially the fact that the term does not connote benevolence, neighbourly love or helping – Haslinger reports the recent broad impact of this re-interpretation upon theology of the diaconate within

### *In my view Haslinger's failure to engage directly at the exegetical level with the re-interpretation of the diakon- words leaves his championing of Diakonie exposed to crippling criticisms*

the Evangelical Church. The impact culminates in Benedict's call for an alternative to the current theology of the diaconate as the arm of the church's social work. Such a call negates the validity of Haslinger's reliance upon the German notion of *Diakonie* as the foundation of the Roman Catholic diaconate. Accordingly, he is required to debate his position vis-à-vis the new consensus developed around the investigations of Benedict, Hentschel and myself. Clearly the two-and-a-half pages he devotes to this task are going to be inadequate.

Haslinger presents his reservations in regard to the new consensus – including some rebuttals – in five brief points. In none of this, however, is it apparent to me that he has engaged any of the exposition, exegesis or argumentation in the three books listed against my name (p. 348). Similarly in

regard to Hentschel. His one reference to her work is to more than 90 pages of her analytical comment on Paul's usage of the *diakon-* terms and elicits from Haslinger just six or seven lines of comment. In a similar space he questions the reliability of my claim that early Christian usage was of a piece with Hellenistic usage, a matter that can only be discussed and determined against a broad range of text, none of which his own presentation extends to at this point of debate.

One passage in particular about the Son of Man 'come to serve/*diakon-*' (Mark 10:45) Haslinger presents as exhibiting essentially the values associated with the German *Diakonie*, namely, as 'an explicit rejection of lordship ... an attitude of lowliness leading to service ... the signature of the theological identity of Jesus' (p. 349). Contrary to this classically 'diakonic' reading of the passage, Hentschel's exegetical treatment and my own entirely concur in identifying the *diakonia* of Jesus as his commitment to carry out his Father's will. An understanding of this passage is critical to any theology of diaconate and, indeed, of ecclesial ministry as a whole. Over thirty years ago it was precisely the exegetical problems presented by this Markan passage that required me to take my research broader afield into classical and Hellenistic Greek-language background to the usage.

In my view Haslinger's failure to engage directly at the exegetical level with the re-interpretation of the *diakon-* words leaves his championing of *Diakonie* exposed to crippling criticisms. The traditional German *Diakonie* colours his account of the history of welfare work (pp. 21-71), especially in regard to its supposed beginnings in Acts 6:1-7. His other extensive section devoted to *Diakonie* in the biblical text (pp. 205-302) progresses under the same semantic limitations. Here, because of his unexamined assumption that *Diakonie/diakonia* is an alternative expression for Christian love/*caritas*, Haslinger supports



# Book review

his vision of the diaconate through lengthy reflections on passages about Jesus' great commandment of love and about Jesus' healing and liberating activities. Strangely, however, he appeals only once to a passage – apart from Mark 10:45 – that includes a *diakon*- term. This passage is the parable at Matthew 25:31-46, where Haslinger fails to identify the specific role of that term in this narrative setting. *diakon*- there (which he translates as 'help') is not a term equivalent to serving the needs of the hungry, the thirsty, or the naked, but is a courtly term appropriately addressed to the king in the language of a king's entourage – valets, butlers and cupbearers – who can think only of anticipating the king's every next whim. The term is not expressing the notion that

liabilities to which deacons and churches would thereby expose themselves. In addition, and perhaps ominously, the pages stand as a warning to all of the professional training that would be required of deacons if they and their churches are not to fall foul of those liabilities.

Above all, however, the book stands as a challenge to everyone involved in the diaconate, whether bishops, directors, deacons, theologians or members of the Congregation for the Clergy, to recognise that incompatible forces are playing out in the re-making of the diaconate. In the stance he adopts, Haslinger is certainly not alone in German or central European circles. To be aware of this one has only to browse ongoing issues of the journal *Diakonia Christi* that is published in Rottenburg am Neckar by the International Centre for the Diaconate. Its reception of Haslinger's work will be interesting to read. To judge by Klaus Kiessling's review – he is the journal's current editor – of Algirdas Jurevicius' search for the essential character of the modern diaconate (40.1/2005: 75081), Dr Haslinger should be well satisfied. And this in spite of the fact that he considers the German Catholic diaconate to have compromised its call with hierarchical ambitions (p. 350).

Diverse, largely national formulations of the diaconate and, in particular, diverse understandings of what *diakonia* means for the diaconate are increasingly introducing tensions into diaconal circles. Expressions of concern, of confusion, and even of disillusionment prompted by such issues are common on deacon websites. A way must be found past the tensions being created around the identity of the *diakonia* of deacons. The most pressing reason for this is that an acceptable resolution of the tensions is likely to present the only opportunity this century to create a diaconate that might usefully serve a church that has been enduring a decades-long crisis in the provision of ministry. ■

*The book stands as a challenge to everyone involved, to recognise that incompatible forces are playing out in the re-making of the diaconate*

'service is the quintessential element' (p. 265) of a disciple's way of life.

## Towards a resolution

The rest of the book – which, from the author's viewpoint, is, indeed, its substance – is a sophisticated exposé of sociological (pp. 73-162), ecclesiological (pp. 163-204) and pastoral (pp. 303-411) dimensions of Christian social work in today's world. Understandably, this main part of his discussion Haslinger conducts with close reference to conditions in Germany and within the ambit of Roman Catholic experience. In the process these pages expose what thoroughly singular assumptions about *Diakonie*, *diakonia* and the diaconate have developed in Germany. But the pages also strongly remind those in English-speaking churches who favour an essentially 'caritative' diaconate of the responsibilities and

## Living the Mystery: Monastic Markers on the Way

Author: Dom Hugh Gilbert OSB

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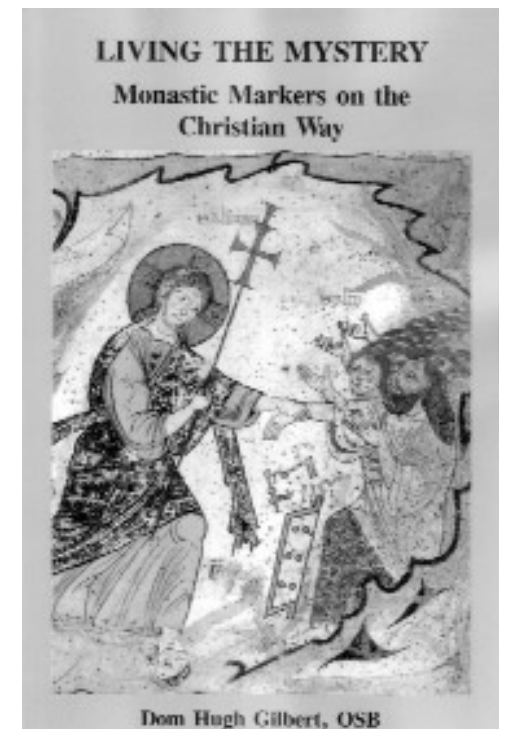
Let not the awesome title of this 'multum in parvo' volume alarm the prospective reader. This collection of monastic conferences and homilies may at times be profound, at times challenging, but it is presented without recourse to theological obscurity or ecclesiastical jargon. Indeed, it may be better regarded as a personal encounter with the author, who offers many interesting reflections, based upon his own experience, than a statutory guide around preconceived spiritual landscapes. There is clarity, stylistic beauty and lightness of touch in this book, which will surely act as a stimulus to the practical spirituality so many of us seek.

The work's subtitle, 'Monastic Markers on the Christian Way', is helpful in some measure, though the presumed objective of the Abbot is the hope that folk outwith the cloister may readily share and delight in the insights on offer. It is extraordinary how easily we are persuaded to ingest all sorts of references and quotations from writers and thinkers of many eras – from the Church Fathers to Soren Kierkegaard to Jean Vanier.

The prologue and epilogue are charming Marian cameos, whilst the body of the volume progresses under the headings 'Rooted', 'Growing', and 'Bearing Fruit' respectively. There is no need, however, slavishly to follow the chapters in that order. Some may prefer to dip into the contents at random.

Dom Gilbert communicates particularly well where the topic is personal: the occasion of Br Daniel's Solemn Profession or of Br Adrian's Golden Jubilee or, above all, the homily given at the Requiem Mass for Dom Maurus Deegan.

The Abbot's erudition, though it comes through constantly, is never oppressive, and his deep understanding of monastic life and liturgy is illuminating without a hint of con-



descension. He has a signal ability to relate the wisdom and compassion of a monk to the spiritual highs and lows of the laity and clergy in their ongoing lives.

There is a special universality in the sections 'The Christian Way' (Pt 1), as neat a peek into ascetical theology as could be wished. 'The Little Foxes' (Pt 2), paragraphs which will be of help to many in examination of conscience (often a taxing period of spiritual gymnastics!), and 'The Spiritual Senses' (Pt 3), a longer chapter which works us hard but will reward our perseverance, though just occasionally Dom Gilbert puts us down with linguistic ruthlessness, e.g. 'By grace, these (senses) are purified and 'elevated', transfigured and transposed, relocated, as it were, in the spirit, and thus returned, at least inchoatively, to their healthy, paradisiacal state, in preparation for their ultimate beatification'. The author describes his material as 'attempts to say something while we wait, about 'the gifts that lie within our comprehension'. But if they help stir a fresh sense of the goodness, truth and beauty of these gifts.... Their author will feel 'blessed himself'. The Abbot need have no fear; for he has given us spiritual reading that is racy, resourceful and uplifting.

Canon Bill Anderson

# Book review

## Listen to the Word Commentaries on selected Opening Prayers of Sundays and Feasts with Sample Homilies

Author: Daniel McCarthy OSB

ISBN: 978-0-9516162-1-5

Date: 2009

Price: £7.99

Publisher: The Tablet Publishing Company, London

In recent years *The Tablet* has been publishing weekly reflections on the Opening Prayers at Mass for each Sunday by Fr Daniel McCarthy, a Benedictine Monk from St Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas. He has been studying at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy in Rome and now teaches at the Pontifical Beda College. The collection covers a whole liturgical year. As regular readers will know Fr McCarthy compares the current English translation of each prayer with the Latin original – what is particularly welcome is that he does this without any polemic or 'point-scoring', avoiding value judgements about the quality of the current



## Listen to the Word

Commentaries on selected Opening Prayers  
of Sundays and Feasts with Sample Homilies  
by Daniel McCarthy OSB

official translations. He draws on the historical antecedents of the prayers – from the earlier Roman Mass, the Ambrosian rite or other sources. The reflections form a valuable source for preachers. Appended to the collection is a collection of sample homilies on some of the prayers by Fr McCarthy and Fr James Leachman from Ealing Abbey.

Continuing liturgical discussions should help us appreciate the wealth of theology in the 'ordinary form' *Missale Romanum*, of which the third edition appeared in 2002. This is best done with some awareness of the Latin texts, and Fr McCarthy explains these well for readers who on the whole have no knowledge of Latin. The collection is also valuable for readers from the rest of northern Europe as they will be able to compare the Latin texts with the translations in Dutch and other languages. At present Fr McCarthy is covering in *The Tablet* Postcommunion prayers so presumably a further volume will appear in due course.

Ashley Beck

# Book review

## The Church and the World: Essays Catholic and Contemporary

Author: John Haldane

ISBN:

pp. 215 + xii

Date: 2008

Price:

Publisher: Gracewing Press, UK,

From the age of ten or earlier, the predominant influence shaping the thinking and attitudes of young people in Britain today is the peer group of youngsters the same age. It is therefore a fight for every parent and every Catholic parent to have much influence. And the situation is dire – in one random class of 12 year olds, with no recent immigrants, when asked how many

believed in God, 10% said they did and 90% said they didn't. Since then, the impact of preoccupation with sex and of secular propaganda on the media has got even greater. This is the background within Church and Catholic school now work. Meantime, over 40% of young people go on to university or have some period of higher education. Most of these and most of the rest pick up the remainder of their information from the media and the internet.

In this setting, they often appear to be in a vacuum, with parents leaving the job of providing intellectual food, appropriate according to the level of the children concerned, to schools, and the schools providing very little, while for the most part the homilies presented in the Church to the congregation of sitting targets are empty of teaching content.

This is the situation in which Haldane, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs at the University of St Andrews, with his broad background in philosophy and art and design, presents his set of thoughtful pieces from newspaper and journal articles, mostly quite recent – showing how the tradition of Christian humanism can be brought to life.

Activity in good causes must not be made a substitute for the renewal of a person's soul or, especially in this age of expansion in higher education, a substitute for time spent in the intellectual renewal of thinking about the fundamental issues of human life and discovering the richness which faith has to offer in place of the barrenness of secularism.

He makes it plain that Catholics have an intellectual resource in Catholic writing of the past which is simply not being tapped. Sixty years ago, George Orwell, known today by lots of young people because of his books *Animal Farm* and *1984*, wrote that "It would be to put it too crudely to say that every poet in our time must either die young, enter the Catholic Church or join

## THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Essays Catholic and Contemporary



John Haldane



# Book *review*

the Communist Party, but in fact the escape from the consciousness of futility is along these lines." Haldane cites Jaroslav Pelikan, then a Lutheran theologian (although later Eastern Orthodox), as writing in 1959 "the road to Rome has often been the road to synthesis of faith and intellect which appeared impossible anywhere else." Haldane then continues "that road has not yet closed but is increasingly less well known, ..." And indeed, to many today, the Catholic Church has become intellectually invisible. And, as he argues, this is much more true in Britain than in most parts of Europe, and certainly than in America.

This he ascribes to the notable degree to which Catholics in Britain have become indistinguishable in their life-styles from the surrounding society. In particular, their lack of Catholic formation compared with their predecessors of years ago has hugely weakened their capacity to argue for their faith, and indeed their own perception of its reasonableness. The natural law tradition of moral thinking which opposes any extra-marital intercourse and which

## *He makes it plain that Catholics have an intellectual resource in Catholic writing of the past which is simply not being tapped*

grasps the fundamental connection between marriage and the having of children has been lost to their knowledge, despite its coherence as explained by Haldane in Essay 17.

The weaknesses in intellectual formation have removed any sense of the reasonableness of faith over a much wider field, in ways indicated in Essays 11 and 12

along with the careful discussion of evolution in 13, with the long tradition of expositions of the Christian faith which show its coherence within itself and with the rest of our knowledge.

When what counts as a right is determined by the majority rule this tends to undermine all intermediate structures such as the family, educational institutions, churches and faith groups. But this conception of right (besides being far away from the idea of right prevalent in 1948, when various declarations of rights were designed precisely to prevent the state from taking all power to itself) constitutes only one option in moral thinking, in a way explained by Haldane in Essays 16, 17 and 20 If structures intermediate between the individual and the state are weakened, whether the state is controlled by the rule of the majority or by a dictatorship, the possibility of real pluralism or independent thinking is lost. Each individual is then projected naked to the forces of the peer group, the majority view and the state.

The remedy is demanding. If the salt has lost its savour, what use is it? What the Church needs is not easier standards for the entry and formation of the clergy, both deacons and priests, but more demanding standards, and freeing priests from bureaucratic tasks, would give people more sense of the point of being a priest. And for the laity, they need to recognize that every Catholic has a vocation. Catholic schools cannot achieve what they are meant to achieve if Catholic parents do not play their part. And whether in the home or at work, every Catholic has his part to play. The message is the same from the first essay to the last.

David Braine,  
Honorary Research Fellow in the  
Department of Philosophy at the  
University of Aberdeen

# Deacons as bachelors

In this journal we will be including regular articles on diaconal formation, by both teachers and students. Neil Mercer is a first year student from the diocese of Arundel and Brighton. He is married with two children and practices for the Criminal Bar.

On 14 September 2008 at St John's Seminary, Womersley, thirteen young men set out on their formation program to be prepared for ordination to the diaconate. Unlike our predecessors we were not embarking upon a course simply agreed by our dioceses and taught by the Church, but was the first intake of a new Foundation Degree in Pastoral Ministry supervised and awarded by St Mary's University College, Twickenham. This is an exciting new development. A Foundation Degree is a vocational qualification which can only be taken by mature students who have a background in the area that they wish to study. We qualify under this heading because of the time we have all spent working in our parishes and being involved in Church activities. The Foundation Degree is taught on a part time basis over two years. At the end of which an award is made. In other areas of study the student has an option to stop at that point and receive their Foundation Degree. However built into the scheme is the option, during the third year of formation, of converting this into a full BA honours degree.

The Course is taught on the modular system. The modules over the three years will cover all of the areas which a Deacon will need to be familiar with. The first year modules are as follows;

- **PM 101 – Foundations for the Study of Theology**

Basic tools for the study of theology, the development of a confident language to describe the 'things of God'; theology as a reflection on pastoral practice; Catholic understanding of revelation as outlined in Vatican II's constitution *Dei Verbum*; use of basic learning resources and skills.

- **PM 102 – Foundations for the Study of Scripture**

Further work on *Dei Verbum* to look at Catholic approaches to the study of scripture. Examples of Biblical exegesis; training in the use of resources for the study of scripture; overview of different ways of studying the scriptures in parishes and prayer-based approaches such as *lectio divina*; Introductory work on using scriptures in homiletics.

- **PM 103 – Foundations of the Sacraments and Liturgy**

Basic concepts of sacramental theology; Basis of Catholic liturgy: study of Vatican II's constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; study of infant baptism and confirmation; Liturgy of the Hours.

- **PM 104 – Foundations of Philosophy and Moral Theology**

Study of the human person, use of reason, doctrine of Creation; Catholic concept of Natural Law; application to specific moral issues relating to sexuality, procreation and the sanctity of human life; fundamental concepts in Catholic social teaching.

- **PM 105 – The Diaconate in the context of the threefold ministry**

The sacrament of Holy Order; study of teaching and issues surrounding the ministry of the deacon; basic teaching about the priesthood and episcopacy; the ministry of the pope as universal pastor.

- **PM 106 – Foundations of Religious Studies**

Catholic teaching about ecumenism and the ways in which it has developed; Catholic teachings on relations with adherents of other faiths.



# Something stirring in Ireland

One of the most important developments in the permanent diaconate in northern Europe in recent years has been the process of restoring the permanent diaconate in Ireland. Kevin Doran is parish priest of Glendalough in the Archdiocese of Dublin. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Angelicum University and currently serves as Diocesan Director for the Permanent Diaconate

## How are the new modules taught?

There are ten formations days and two study week-ends each year. The starting point is the reading list, which is extensive and covers each module. Background reading is essential before attempting to get stuck into a module. There are lectures delivered by well known and scholarly clergy and others, *inter alios*, Fr Ashley Beck (Dean of Studies), Abbot Laurence O'Keefe OSB, Fr Cameron-Mowat SJ, Fr Michael Cullinan, Fr Bill Wilson, Fr Gerard Bradley, Fr Peter Edwards, Mrs Joanna Hale, Professor John Morrill, Canon Peter Collins and most recently Bishop Pat Lynch SS.CC. Lecture notes are provided and along with audio recordings posted on our web site. Essays are set which must be returned by the next session. We are each assigned a personal tutor, usually a priest or deacon who lives near to the student, whom we meet once a month in order to get our essay into shape and hopefully avoid howlers.

In addition to essays we must write summaries of the lectures and are set portfolio tasks. Portfolio tasks are an important part of the Foundation Degree philosophy. We are set a task to do each week, which might be, for example, to think about baptism and record our thoughts that week on our portfolio sheet. The most difficult of the assignments, and time consuming, are the dreaded ICT presentations. The group here really divides into those who use "Power Point" at work or have children of school age at home and those who don't. We are set a title for a talk and then must deliver it as if to a parish gathering (rather than thirteen boisterous middle aged men intent on heckling and devising real stinkers of questions from the floor). All of this is assessed and marked using the University's marking system and papers. Dr. Anthony Towey, Head of the School of Theology, Philosophy and History at St. Mary's is a frequent visitor to the Seminary on formation days.

Our second year will be similar; however the structure of the third year is still being worked out. How does significantly stepping up the academic side of the Formation Program affect the students? Our group is an eclectic lot, there are GPs, Senior Management, Telecommunication Engineers, Ex Police, Painters and Decorators and a Barrister. Some of the group have primary degrees, others don't. The Foundation Degree is designed to be taken by people who did not go University first time around, and is not meant to be intimidating. It does however foster learning and intellectual rigour.

How does this new course leading to BA degrees benefit the Diaconate Formation program? It does so in many ways. Deacons perform many tasks in their Parishes, many of which can be done by lay people without any difficulty. But there are areas of diaconal ministry which are clerical and are seen as such. Priests spend many years in the seminary as full time students before emerging with their Bachelor of Theology degrees and being let loose on congregations to preach and teach. The very essence of the Diaconate, married men with full time jobs, precludes this. But a full and rigorous training is nevertheless necessary for the deacon. A part-time degree course run and awarded by a fully fledged, though Catholic, university squares this circle.

The award of a BA (Hons) at the end of his formation validates this process in a transparent way and empowers the Deacon to face his congregation, most of whom may still be confused as to his precise role and status, with the full authority of ordained clergy of the Catholic Church and backed by the academic standing of St Mary's University College. This is why thirteen married young men in their forties and fifties are hoping to become Bachelors at St Mary's Twickenham. ■

## At Last All Powerful Master

In October 2000 the Irish Episcopal Conference decided 'in the light of the pastoral needs of the Church in Ireland' that the time was right for the restoration of the permanent diaconate. The *National Directory and Norms for Ireland* received the approval *ad experimentum* of the Congregation for Catholic Education in July 2005. It was the 'dawn of an era' but we were still a long way from 'sunrise.'

Over the next three years the Episcopal Conference continued to explore how the Irish Church might proceed with this new departure in ministry. Some clergy as well as members of the lay faithful felt that this would be a step backwards, while others wondered whether we in Ireland were yet ready for such a move. It soon became

## Deacons will have their own place in the ministry of the Church, and they are not there to take the place of anyone else

apparent that many of the concerns which were being expressed in relation to the diaconate were, in reality, questions about ministry in general, and not specific to the diaconate. These included questions about partnership in mission, about leadership and service, about the role of women, and about the place of ordained ministry within the wider framework of the mission of the Church.

A two day workshop on ministry was organised, for key people in each diocese who would have a role in the promotion and development of ministry. The workshop was intended to be the first stage in a Catechesis which would facilitate a renewal of ministry and which would situate the diaconate appropriately in its relationship with priesthood and lay ministry. Dr. Stijn Van den Bossche (Netherlands) explored the theme *To be called...*. At the very heart of *Christianity*. He was joined by Dr. Susan K. Wood who spoke on *Lay and Ordained Ministry*. Other guest speakers included representatives of the diaconate community in the Archdiocese of Southwark. Against that background, I had the opportunity to present that *National Directory and Norms for Ireland* and to suggest how they might be implemented.

It was significant that when, in the Spring of 2008, Archbishop Martin of Dublin and Bishop Christopher Jones of Elphin announced their intention to establish the permanent diaconate, they each presented it as one among a number of new initiatives in ministry. Deacons will have their own place in the ministry of the Church, and they are not there to take the place of anyone else.

## Will there be any Applicants?

During my eight years in vocations ministry, I grew accustomed to questions such as 'how many have you got?' My stock

answer was 'how many did you send?' Archbishop Martin made it a condition of acceptance onto the propaedeutic programme for the permanent diaconate, that each applicant would have the recommendation of his parish priest. He also asked priests only to recommend men

We were joined by eight applicants from the diocese of Elphin, which is in the West of Ireland. There was, within the whole group of twenty four men, a wealth of experience in all walks of life, and a significant history of service to the Church, both in the liturgy and in the ministry of charity.

*He also asked priests only to recommend men whom they could envisage, following a period of formation, as effective partners with them in ministry*

whom they could envisage, following a period of formation, as effective partners with them in ministry.

We began our propaedeutic period in October 2008, with sixteen participants.

### The Propaedeutic Period

The weekends were challenging and substantial without being heavily academic. Each weekend involved a period of guided pastoral reflection, the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. The first weekend focussed on vocation and ministry, in the Scriptures and in the history of our two dioceses. The wives of married applicants were asked to participate in the second weekend, when the focus was on how one might fruitfully combine marriage and ordained ministry.

This weekend was facilitated by a team from Accord, the Catholic marriage care service. We were also very fortunate to have the generous participation of Canon Robert and Mrs Anne Deane of the Church of Ireland, who shared their own experience. The focus of our third weekend was on spirituality and liturgy, and the fourth weekend was an invitation to reflect at an affective level on leadership and relational issues (power and service; success and failure etc.), under the guidance of Dr. Johanna Merry. Just before Easter we have scheduled a weekend retreat at Knock

which will help to evaluate their capacity to express themselves coherently and appropriately and to listen respectfully. In order to assess their capacity to read, reflect and write, they have each been asked to write an essay on Diaconate as a ministry of service in the Church.

### Wives

As part of the evaluation process, we have asked all the wives to come and meet us again. This time, they have taken part in a small focus group of four or five women, followed by an individual interview with the diocesan director and the psychologist, in which each woman has had the opportunity to speak more personally about her husband's desire to offer himself as a candidate, and how she feels and thinks about it. The participation of the wives in the propaedeutic year has been crucial to the whole process, and it seems to have worked well.

*A thousand hours of lectures and seminars over a three year period would be the equivalent of a full-time degree programme*

(Cnoc Muire), the national Marian shrine in the West of Ireland.

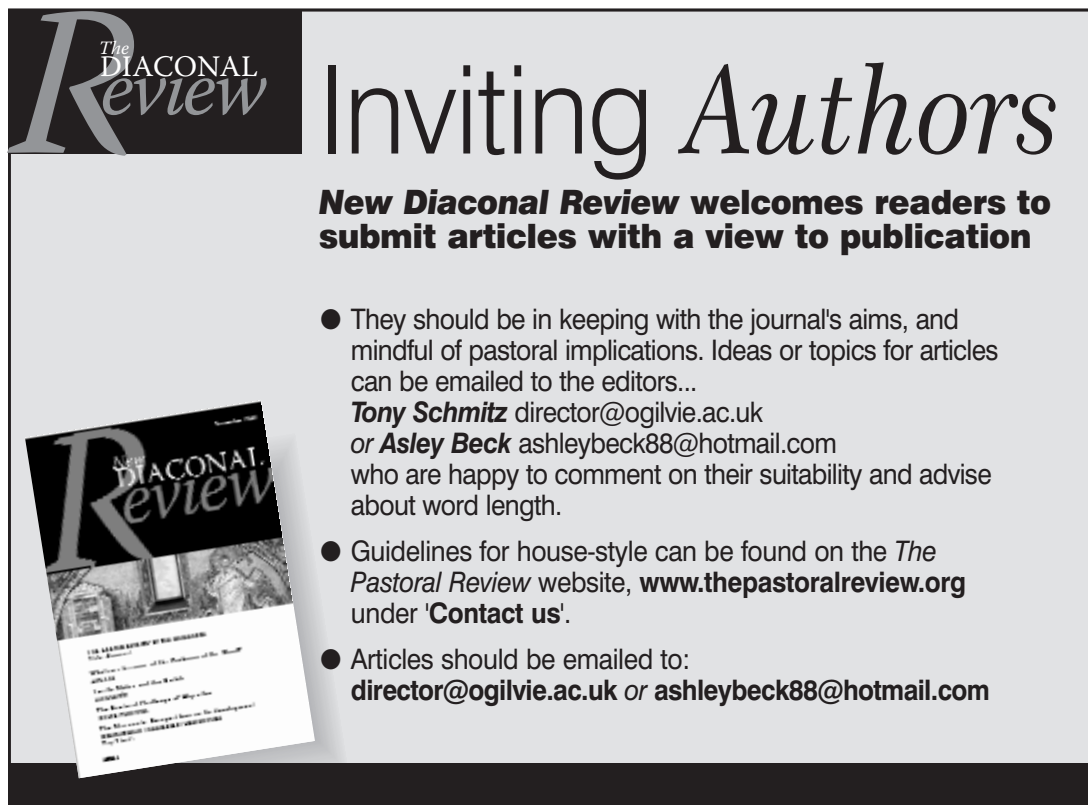
### Evaluation

The propaedeutic period was intended to be a time of discernment, for the applicants, for their wives and families and also for the two dioceses involved. For that reason, it seemed to make sense that, while applications were considered carefully before the programme began, the evaluation proper would take place at the end of the propaedeutic period, and would be followed by a formal recommendation to the bishop.

With the help of Accord we have devised a multi-faceted process. Applicants will have a series of individual interviews, with a priest, a psychologist and a lay-person with a significant background in ministry. They will also participate in a group process,

### Formation

During the past year, various options in respect of the formation programme have been considered. Final decisions have yet to be made. One concern, which I think we share with the Church in other countries, is how we can provide a serious theological formation, together with the elements of spiritual, pastoral and human formation, taking account of the fact that our candidates are, for the most part, married and in full employment. A thousand hours of lectures and seminars over a three year period would be the equivalent of a full-time degree programme. The development of the formation programme is still 'a work in progress.'



**The Diaconal Review**

# Inviting Authors

**New Diaconal Review welcomes readers to submit articles with a view to publication**

- They should be in keeping with the journal's aims, and mindful of pastoral implications. Ideas or topics for articles can be emailed to the editors...  
**Tony Schmitz** director@ogilvie.ac.uk  
or **Asley Beck** ashleybeck88@hotmail.com  
who are happy to comment on their suitability and advise about word length.
- Guidelines for house-style can be found on the *The Pastoral Review* website, [www.thepastoralreview.org](http://www.thepastoralreview.org) under 'Contact us'.
- Articles should be emailed to:  
**director@ogilvie.ac.uk** or **ashleybeck88@hotmail.com**

# Diaconate in the New Testament

The NDR presents the next instalment of a fresh (and for the first time complete) translation from the original French into English of The International Theological Commission's important research document called The Diaconate – Perspectives on its Development published in 2002. Here the German and Latin footnotes have been translated for the first time. Tony Schmitz is a deacon of the Diocese of Aberdeen and co-editor of the New Diaconal Review. He is Director of Studies for the national formation programme for deacons in Scotland. He thanks Abbot Hugh Gilbert OSB of Pluscarden Abbey for his help with the German footnotes. The following is only the first part of the Second Chapter.

## Chapter Two DIACONATE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE

### I Diaconate in the New Testament

#### 1. Difficulties related to terminology

In contrast with the abundant use of the word *presbyteros*, the word *diakonos* is virtually absent from the Old Testament. In the rare instances where the word *diakonos* is attested in the Septuagint, it means messenger, courier, or servant.<sup>1</sup> The Latin (Vulgate) Bible rendered it in a general sense by the word *minister* or, transliterating the Greek word in a more

specific sense, by the word *diaconus*. But the terms *minister*, *ministerium*, *ministrare* also correspond to other Greek terms such as *hyperetes* and *leitourgos*. Thrice in the Vulgate we find the use of *diaconus*.<sup>2</sup> In all other cases it is rendered by the word *minister*.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the words *diakoneo*, *diakonia*, *diakonos*, Greek could choose between the following words: *douleuo* (to serve as a servant), *therapeuo* (to be employed as a volunteer), *latreuo* (to serve for payment), *leitourgeo* (to be charged with public office), *hypereteo* (to govern).<sup>4</sup> It is significant, anyway, that the verbal form *diakonein* is unknown in the Septuagint, the functions of service being rendered there by the terms *leitourgein* or *latreuein*. Philo used it only with the meaning of “to serve”.<sup>5</sup> Josephus was acquainted with it in the sense of “to serve”, “to obey” and “sacerdotal service”.<sup>6</sup> In the New Testament, the word *douleuo* indicated service of a completely personal kind: the service of charity. In the language of the Gospels<sup>7</sup> as well as at Acts 6,2, *diakoneo* means “table service”. Making a collection the proceeds of which Paul would take to Jerusalem is a service of this type.<sup>8</sup> The Apostle goes to

Jerusalem for “the service of the saints”.<sup>9</sup>

As for the use of the words *cheirotomia*, *cheirotesia*, *ordinatio* there remains a degree of incertitude in respect of the use of these terms.<sup>10</sup>

#### 2. Data from the New Testament

The first and most fundamental relevant datum from the New Testament is that the verb *diakonein* designates the very mission of Christ as servant (Mt 10,45 and parallels; cf. Mt 12,18; Acts 4,30; Phil 2,6-11). This word or its derivatives also designate the exercise of service by his disciples

(M 10,43 ff ; Mt 20,26 ff; 23,11; Lk 8,3; Rom 15,25), services of different kinds in the Church, notably the apostolic service of preaching the Gospel, and other charismatic gifts.<sup>11</sup>

The words *diakonein* and *diakonos* are very widely used in the language of the New Testament.<sup>12</sup>

The *diakonos* can signify the servant who waits at table (e.g. Jn 2,5 et 9), the servant of the Lord (Mt 22,13; Jn 12,26; Mk 9,35; 10,43; Mt 20,26; 23,11), the servant of a spiritual power (2 Cor 11,14; Eph 3,6;

1 Neh 1,10: “They are your servants and your people whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.”; 6,3: “So I sent messengers to them to say ...”; 6,5: “Sanballat sent me his servant ...”; Prov 10,4a (LXX); 1M 11,58; 4M 9,17; Esther (Greek) 6,13.

2 Phil 1,1; 1 Tim 3,8.12.

3 Cf. E. Cattaneo, *I ministeri nella chiesa antica, testi patristici dei primi tre secoli*, Milan 1997, 33f; J. Lécuyer, *Le sacrement de l'ordination* (ThH 65), Paris 1983, 131.

4 H.W. Beyer, *diakoneo*, *diakonia*, *diakonos*, in: ThWNT, Vol. II, 81-93.

5 *De vita contemplativa* 70 et 75.

6 *Antiquitates* VII 365; X 72.

7 Lk 17,8; 12,37; 22,26; Jn 12,2.

8 2 Cor 8,19.

9 Rom 15,25.

10 “The meaning of the laying on of hands in Acts 6,6 and 13,3 has been much disputed, but the stress laid on this gesture in both texts makes it difficult to see it as a mere act of blessing and not as an ordination rite... The usual verb to denote the election of a minister by the community is *eklegein*, Latin: *eligere*. The verb *cheirotonein* may have the same meaning, ‘to choose by stretching out the hand’ (*Didache*. 15,1), but it becomes a technical term for the appointment, i.e., the ordination of a minister, in Latin: *ordinare*. In this meaning it is synonymous with *kathistanai*, Latin: *instituere*. Another synonym is *procheiridzein*. It is less usual and sometimes denotes the aspect of election and appointment by God. All these verbs are synonymous with *cheir(as) epitheinai*, but whereas the former group denotes the juridical aspect, the latter lays emphasis on the liturgical act. Moreover all the terms of the former group can be used for an appointment/ordination which does not include an imposition of hands, but there is apparently a preference for *cheirotonein/cheirotomia*, as they are composed with *cheir-*, when the imposition of the hand (or of both hands) is included. A first attempt for such a distinction is made by Hippolytus, *Trad. Ap.* 10.” J. Ysebaert, *The Deaconesses in the Western Church of late Antiquity and their Origin*, in: *Eulogia, Mélanges offertes à Antoon A. R. Bastiaensen* (IP XXIV), Steenburg, 1991, 423.

11 Rom 11,13; 12,6ff; 1 Cor 12,5; 2 Cor 4,1; Eph 4,11ff; Heb 1,14: “*leitourgica pneumata*”; Acts 21,19; Col 4,17.

12 “‘Office’ in Jesus’ sense must always be ‘diakonia’. Scripture chooses this word in order to define the essence of ‘office’, and does so consciously and expressly, not in any sense accidentally. The Greek language had at its command a whole range of possibilities for expressing ‘office’ in human society and in the religious realm (*archai*, *exousiai*, *archontes*). The New Testament chose none of them, but opted for a designation that was customary neither in the Jewish nor in the Hellenistic world.” E. Dassmann, *Ämter und Dienste in der frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (*Hereditas* 8), Bonn 1994, 37.



Col 1,23; Gal 2,17; Rom 15,8; 2 Cor 3,6), the servant of the Gospel, the servant of Christ, the servant of God (2 Cor 11,23); even pagan authorities are in the service of God (Rom 13,4); deacons are servants of the Church (Col 1,25; 1 Cor 3,5). Where a deacon belongs to one of the churches, the Vulgate does not employ the word *minister*, but retains rather the Greek word *diaconus*.<sup>13</sup> It is this fact that demonstrates clearly that we are not dealing with the institution of the diaconate in Acts 6, 1-6.<sup>14</sup>

“Diaconate” and “apostolate” are sometimes synonyms, as in Acts 1,17-25, where – on the occasion of the appointment of Matthias to the eleven apostles – Peter calls the apostolate “part of our service” (v. 17: *ton kleron tes diakonias tautes*) and speaks of service and of apostolate (v. 25: *ton topon tes diakonias kai apostoles*, which can sometimes be found to be translated as: “the service of the apostolate”). This text in Acts also cites Ps 109,8: “Let someone else take over his office (*ten*

*episkopen*)”. The question thus arises: Are the following expressions equivalent, or not: *diakonia*, *apostole*, *episkope*? In the view of M. J. Schmitt and J. Colson “apostolate” is “an editorial clause qualifying and correcting ‘*diakonias*’.”<sup>15</sup>

Acts 6,1-6 describes the institution of “the Seven”<sup>16</sup> “for serving at table”. Luke gives us the reason for this institution – tensions within the community: “The Hellenists began to complain (*egeneto goggysmos*) against the Hebrews because in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked.” (Acts 6,1) We do not know if these “Hellenist” widows belonged to the community, or not, in view of the strict regard for ritual purity. Were the Apostles hoping to send the rebel “Hellenists” away from Jerusalem and out to the provinces because their preaching in the synagogue was the cause of much provocation? Was it for that reason that the Apostles chose “the Seven” – a number corresponding to the number of magistrates in provincial

communities attached to a synagogue? But, at the same time, they wanted, through the laying on of hands, to safeguard the unity of the Spirit and thus to avoid a schism.<sup>17</sup> Commentators on Acts do not explain the significance of this laying on of hands by the Apostles.

### *In respect of the Seven, Luke speaks only of Stephen’s discourse in the Jerusalem synagogue and of his martyrdom, as he also writes of Philip’s apostolate and baptismal ministry in Samaria*

It could also be that the Apostles intended the Seven to be at the head of the “Hellenists” (baptised Greek-speaking Jews) to accomplish amongst them the same work that presbyters accomplished amongst “Hebrew” Christians.<sup>18</sup>

The reason given for the designation of the chosen Seven (the murmuring amongst the Hellenists) is in contradiction to their actual subsequent activity as described by Luke. We simply hear nothing about service at tables. In respect of the Seven, Luke speaks only of the activities of Stephen and of Philip – or, more precisely, he writes only of Stephen’s discourse in the Jerusalem synagogue and of his martyrdom, as he also writes of Philip’s apostolate and baptismal ministry in Samaria.<sup>19</sup> What of the others?<sup>20</sup>

In the churches entrusted to the apostolic care of St Paul deacons appear alongside the *episkopoi* as exercising a ministry that is subordinate to, or coordinated with, theirs (Phil 1,1; 1 Tim 3,1-13). In the apostolic writings themselves there is already frequent mention of deacons with the bishop, or else of the bishop with the presbyters. On the other hand, historical sources that cite all three together – bishop, presbyter and deacon – are rare. ■

13 Phil 1,1: “cum episcopis et diaconis”; 1 Tim 3, 8.12: “diaconos similiter... (sicut episcopi)... diacones sint... ”

14 a) “This fact shows that the origin of the diaconal office is not to be found in Acts 6 ... The diakonos is at the service not only of his community, but also of his bishop.” H. W. Beyer, *ibid.*, 90. Cf. M. Dibelius, *Bischöfe und Diakonen in Philippi* (1937) *Das kirchliche Amt im Neuen Testament* (WdF CDXXXIX), Darmstadt 1977, 413ff.

b) E. Schweizer, *Das Amt. Zum Amtsbegriff im Neuen Testament*, in: *Gemeinde und Gemeindeordnung im Neuen Testament* (ATHANT 35), Zurich 1955, 154-164: “With few exceptions there is only one word – *diakonia* – to designate what we call ‘office’, i.e. the service of an individual within the community. The New Testament thus consistently chooses a word which is completely unbiblical and non-religious and never entails any association with some special dignity or position. In the Greek Old Testament the word has only a profane meaning. ... In the development of the Greek language the basic meaning of ‘serving at table’ was broadened to the more generic meaning of ‘serving’. It almost always suggests something inferior, though it can also, in Hellenism, describe the attitude of the wise before God (though not vis-à-vis his fellow men).” K. H. Schelke, *Dienste und Diener in den Kirchen der Neutestamentlichen Zeit*, in: *Concilium* 5 (1969) 158-164; J. Brosch, *Charismen und Ämter in der Urkirche*, Bonn 1951. Cf. B. Köting, *Ämt und Verfassung in der Alten Kirche. Ecclesia peregrinans, Das Gottesvolk unterwegs* I (METH 54, 1), Münster 1988, 429; G. Schöllgen, *Die Anfänge der Professionalisierung des Klerus und das kirchliche Amt in der Syrischen Didaskalie* (JAC, Ergbd 26), Münster 1998, 93.

15 Cf. J. Colson, *Ministre de Jésus-Christ ou le Sacerdoce de l’Évangile* (ThH 4), Paris 1966, 191.

16 It was Irenaeus of Lyons (*Adv. Haer.* 3,12,10) who was the first to call ‘the Seven’ ‘deacons’.

17 “The number seven after the pattern of the seven members who usually comprised the local ‘committee’ in Jewish communities. These were called the ‘seven of a city’ or ‘the seven best men of a city’, while the individual members were called ‘shepherds’ or ‘presidents’. H. L. Strack-P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Vol. II, Munich, 1969, 641.

18 E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte, Neu übersetzt und erklärt, 12. neubearb. Auflage, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar*, Göttingen 1959, 228-222; E. Dassmann, *Ämter und Dienste in den frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (*Hereditas* 8), Bonn 1994, 232: “We have no precise details as regards the origin of the diaconal office, since it is clear that Acts 6 describes not the appointment of deacons but of representatives for the Greek-speaking element of the early Christian community.”

19 Cf. Acts 8, 12.26-40 and 21, 8 where Philip is called “the evangelist”: “The next day we left and came to Caesarea. Here we called on Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven (*Philippou tou euaggelistou, ontos ek ton eptai*), and stayed with him.”

20 “The Nicolaitans had as teacher Nicolas, one of the Seven who were the first to be ordained deacons by the Apostles. They lived unbridled lives. (*Nicolaitae autem magistrum quidem habent Nicolaum, unum ex VII qui primi ad diaconium ab apostolis ordinati sunt: qui indiscrete vivunt.*” *Adv. Haer.* I, 23; Harvey I, 214. Hippolytus, *Philosophumena* VII 36; Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, 33. For the contrary view, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* II 118,3 and III 25,5-26,2.

PONTIFICAL LATERAN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTUM PATRISTICUM AUGUSTINIANUM  
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UNIVERSITY VAN TILBURG FACULTY OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY  
**XXXVIII INCONTRO DI STUDIOSI DELL'ANTICHITÀ CRISTIANA\***  
7-9 MAY 2009 *\*The 14th Meeting of Scholars of Christianity*  
**Diakonia, diaconiae, diaconate semantica e storia**  
Rome - Augustinianum 7-9 May 2009  
Via Paolo VI, 25 - 00193 Roma

— P R O G R A M M E —

**THURSDAY, 7TH MAY (start 9.00)**

Robert Dodaro (Preside dell'Augustinianum) –  
Adelbert J. Denaux (Decano Fac. Teol. Catt.  
Utrecht/Tilburg) *Saluto ai partecipanti*  
John N. Collins (Seaford [Melbourne]),  
*A Monocultural Usage: diakon-Words in  
Classical, Hellenistic, and Patristic Sources*  
(relazione di apertura).  
Margherita Cecchelli (Roma), *Aspetti di  
approfondimento sui problemi del servizio  
assistenziale* (relazione di apertura).  
Prosper Grech (Roma), *Diaconia nel Nuovo  
Testamento* (relazione di apertura).

**Afternoon (16.00)**

**Section A: Augustine and Jerome**

Sylwester Ja\_kiewicz (Radom),  
*Il diacono catecheta in base all'opera De  
catechizandis rudibus di sant'Agostino*  
Francesca Maria Catarinella (Foggia), *Storia di  
diaconato negli scritti polemici di s. Agostino*  
Paul Rigby (Ottawa), *Augustine's Embrace of the  
Clerical Ministry*  
Emanuele Di Santo (Messina),  
*La critica dell'Ambrosiaster e di Girolamo  
all'arroganza dei diaconi romani*  
Francesco Corsaro (Catania),  
*Girolamo e il diaconato romano al IV secolo*  
Ivan Bodrozic (Spalato), *Girolamo e la disputa sulla  
superiorità tra il sacerdozio e il diaconato*

**Section B: Female Diaconate**

Giovanna Martino (Napoli), *Il diaconato femminile  
nella chiesa primitiva: note di esegesi patristica*  
Juana Maria Torres Prieto (Cantabria), *Mulieres  
diaconissae. Algunos ejemplos paradigmáticos en  
la Iglesia oriental del siglo IV*  
Rosa Maria Parrinello (Torino),  
*Ruoli e funzioni del ministero femminile:  
il caso delle diaconesse (v-vii secolo)*  
Ilaria Trabace (Bari),  
*Le diaconesse in area Cappadoce*  
Paola Santorelli (Napoli), *Radegonda diaconessa:  
una consacrazione singolare*  
(Ven. Fort. Radeg. 12, 28)  
Anne Burgsmüller (Sasbach),  
*Diakonin Radegundis (520-587) - demütige  
Dienerin und mutige Predigerin*  
Moira Scimmi (Milano), *Le antiche diaconesse nella  
storiografia del XX secolo. Problemi di metodo*

**FRIDAY, 8TH MAY (Start 9.00)**

**Sezione A: East**

Athanasios Henein (Atene), *La place de la Diaconie  
dans la tradition patristique Copte*  
Roberto Alciati (Torino),  
*Diaconi e diaconie nel monachesimo egiziano:  
la testimonianza di Cassiano*  
Peter Bruns (Bamberg),  
*Der Diakonat im Synodicon Orientale*  
Mariachiara Giorda (Torino), *Monachesimo e  
istituzioni ecclesiastiche in Egitto tra il IV e il VI  
secolo: la figura del diacono come intermediario*  
Ilaria Ramelli (Milano), *Teosebia in ministero  
Ecclesiae: un esempio di diakonia nella  
Cappadocia del tardo IV secolo?*  
Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Sturminster Marshall),  
*Deacons in the Syrian Church Order Tradition*  
Marco Bais (Roma), *Larmeno sarkawag (diacono) e  
alcuni suoi corrispondenti (trans)caucasici*

**Section B: John Chrysostom**

Ysabel de Andia (Paris),  
*La diaconie des pauvres chez Jean Chrysostome*  
Roberto Osculati (Catania),  
*L'autorità civile "diacono di Dio" (Romani 13, 1-  
7) in Giovanni Crisostomo*  
Arianna Rotondo (Catania),  
*Il diaconato nell'interpretazione di Giovanni  
Crisostomo (Atti 6, 1-6)*  
Margaret Schatkin (Boston), *Diakonia and the  
Christology of St. John Chrysostom*

**Section C: The Most Ancient Christian**

Matteo Grosso (Torino),  
*Il "diakonos dell'errore" nel Codex Tchacos*  
Françoise Thelamon (Rouen), *Statut et fonctions  
des diacres d'après les Histoires ecclésiastiques*  
Bart J. Koet (Utrecht),  
*Can the Use of the Word diakonoi in John 2 Teach  
us Something about the Diaconate?*  
Anni Hentschel (Höchberg), *Paul's Apostleship and  
the Concept of \_\_\_\_\_ in 2 Cor*  
Dan Batovici (Bucarest), *Diverging Ecclesial  
Functions in the Second Century: Shepherd of  
Hermas and Ignatius of Antioch's Diaconia*  
Lisania Giordano (Catania), *Diakonia ecclesiastica e  
civile nei primi secoli cristiani*

**Afternoon (16.00)**

**Section A: Greek authors**

Federico Fatti (Perugia), *«Noi che gli siamo legati da  
ogni punto di vista» (Bas. ep. 51): Basilio  
diacono*  
Mario Girardi (Bari), *Il lessico della diaconia in  
Basilio di Cesarea: fonti e rilievo*  
Felix Albrecht (Göttingen), *Diakonus Christi. Heron  
von Antiochien und die Diakonatskonzeption der  
(Pseudo-) Ignatianen*  
Judith Marie Gentle (Stuebenville), *The Blessed  
Virgin Mary as the Model of Diakonia According  
to the Christological Writings of St. Cyril of  
Alexandria*  
Oleh Kindiy (Lviv), *The Christological Notion of  
Diakonos in Clement of Alexandria*  
Alexandre Faivre (Strasbourg), *«Diacres des mystères  
et diacre de nourriture et de boisson» (Ignace,  
Tralliens 2-3), les enjeux de l'infériorisation des  
diakonoi dans une triade ministérielle*  
Giovanni Antonio Nigro (Bari), *Diaconi e diaconesse  
in Epifanio di Salamina: un rapporto  
problematico?*

**Section B: Latin authors**

Daniela Turcato (Padova), *Il concetto di ministerium  
nell'antropologia di Tertulliano*  
Laurence Gosserez (Grenoble), *La figure de saint  
Laurent dans le Peristephanon de Prudence  
(Pe., II)*  
Gianluca Pilara (Roma), *Caratteri e funzioni  
dell'ufficio diaconale nell'opera e nel disegno  
ecclesiale di papa Damaso I*  
Rocco Schembra (Catania), *Ruolo e funzione dei  
diaconi nell'opera di Cesario di Arles*  
Philippe Blaudeau (Paris), *Liberatus de Carthage ou  
l'historiographie comme service diaconal*

**Section C: Various topics**

William T. Ditevig (Saint Leo [Florida]), *Possible  
Second Temple Antecedents of The Seven (Acts  
6): The Mishnah and The Yerushalmi*  
Cyril Brun (Rouen),  
*La délégation participative de l'épiscopé*  
Mario Cimosa – Gillian Bonney (Roma), *Lo sviluppo  
del significato del linguaggio diaconale  
("servizio-servo") dal mondo orientale-greco-  
romano al mondo giudaico-cristiano*  
Antoni\_urek (Tarnów), *"Diacono defectu presbiteri"  
– il carattere del servizio del diacono nella Chiesa  
latina nel V-VI s.*  
Michaela Zelzer (Wien),  
*Il diacono Nonnoso di Molzbichl (Carinzia)*  
Geoffrey Dunn (Virginia [Australia]), *Deacons in the  
Early Fifth Century: Canonical Developments  
under Innocent I*  
Maria Brutti (Viterbo),  
*Diacono e diaconia in Flavio Giuseppe*  
Chiara Della Putta (Padova),  
*Il concetto di diakonia in Epitteto*

**SATURDAY, 9TH MAY (Start 9.00)**

**Section A: Archeology, Epigraphy and  
Iconography**

Alessandra Milella (Roma), *Pauperibus  
sumministrantur alimonia. Le distribuzioni  
alimentari a Roma tra tarda antichità e  
altomedioevo: aspetti giuridici e implicazioni  
architettoniche*  
Lucrezia Spera (Roma), *Regiones divisit diaconibus.  
Il ruolo dei diaconi negli apparati  
amministrativi della Chiesa di Roma*  
Antonio Enrico Felle (Bari), *Diaconi e diaconissae  
tra Oriente ed Occidente. L'apporto della  
documentazione epigrafica*  
Umberto Utro (Roma), *Immagini di diaconi  
nell'iconografia paleocristiana*  
Mary M. Schaefer (Halifax [Canada]), *Art Historical  
Evidence (5th-12th Centuries) for Women's  
Official Ministries in Rome*  
**Section B: Phoebe**  
Adolf Martin Ritter (Neckargemünd),  
*Das Problem der Phoebe in Römer 16, 1.2*  
Romano Penna (Roma), *Febe, diacono della chiesa  
di Cencre (Rom 16, 1-2)*  
Corrado Marucci (Roma), *Il diaconato di Febe  
(Rom 16, 1-2) secondo l'esegesi moderna*

**Plenary Section (11.00)**

Giulia Piccaluga (Roma),  
*Il diacono sullo sfondo delle religioni del mondo  
classico*

N.B. For the publication of the contributions, please  
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text and CD) by September 2009, the Secretaria  
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"Laura Biagiotti" and the Savelli family.

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