



Looking for a Diaconal Lens and What to Do With One When You Find It

by John Cumming, Diocese of California, Lay Member of AED Board

“Looking Through A Diaconal Lens” is the theme of AED’s presence at the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. That sounds obvious, like a cliché. But what does it mean if you’re not a deacon? Where do you find one, and how do you use it once you have it?

I’m not a deacon by vocation though I’m married to one. I came to the attention of AED (then known as NAAD) through my involvement with the School for Deacons in Berkeley and from hanging out at the NAAD booth at the 2009 General Convention in Anaheim. I was recruited to run for one of the lay seats on the NAAD→AED board. I’m not sure I would have voted for myself if I

didn’t already know who I was, but I was elected and began my term at the board’s March 2011 meeting in New Orleans.

And there I was, a naïf among the servant leaders of the servant leaders of the entire church.

I had to take on some of the workload, so I volunteered to coordinate the planning committee for the 2012 General Convention. That seemed like a no-brainer – that we would have a convention booth and that, following the board’s well-executed effort to get people talking about the diaconate in Anaheim (through questions and answers about deacons and a daily drawing for Ormonde Plater’s new book *Deacons in the Liturgy*), I could pick up the ball and help move it toward 2012.

What I did not anticipate was the debate over whether AED should even have a booth or a presence at the 2012 General Convention. Booths are expensive to rent and maintain – not necessarily the best use of limited funds – and only a side show to the main event where the church’s real business and expressions of doctrine and mission take place. And it’s at this main event where diaconal voices are infrequently heard and, if heard, too readily ignored. Certainly church leaders express concern over the right things, about the downtrodden, the marginalized, and inclusiveness. But when it comes to the business of a church facing



ever-declining resources and membership, mission invariably yields to maintenance in our collective attempt to be good stewards of the church’s stuff, to maintain and preserve the polity in the hope of pursuing our mission another day. The people we aspire to serve and include in our church are rarely at the table for these discussions and, understandably, the first to feel the effects of budget cuts, whether it’s church clerical staff losing their benefits or jobs, or outreach ministries that we never did very much of or very well anyway, losing their funding.

In truth, AED did not have a serious debate over whether or not to be at convention. In my own view, since General Convention is the highest authority of our church, we must be there, even if only to voice our disagreement, however weakly or in vain, with where we see things headed. These concerns did, however, inform how

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Historic Opportunities!

Deacons in Southern Virginia are eagerly planning the 2013 AED Conference in Williamsburg/Jamestown. The event promises to be rich in fellowship, education, history and tradition --- so much so that you will want to plan a few extra days either side of the official dates to take it all in! The Woodlands is offering the same room rate for 3 days before and after the conference and attendees will receive 1 free Historic Area Conference ticket, allowing access to all the historic sites. Guests may purchase the same ticket, good for the entire length of stay, for \$18.00, by identifying themselves to Dotty Porter, Senior Conference Services Manager at (757) 565 8838 or dporter@cwf.org, as part of the AED group. The conference begins with an opening liturgy in the shadow of the Jamestown Church tower, site of the earliest Anglican Church and of the first permanent English settlement in the Colonies, with an opportunity to wander through Fort James, guided by a Deacon docent. Williamsburg itself offers numerous

special events and interesting opportunities, which tend to change weekly, including touring colonial gardens, witnessing the jury trial of a suspected witch, touring the Gov-

smiths, etc. The DeWitt Wallace Museum features current archeological excavations and masterworks in art, silver and ceramics. In addition, Friday evening is free for dinner in one of the historic taverns, for which you will want to make reservations. To catch a glimpse of the possibilities, to buy passes for accompanying family members and to make dinner reservations, go to www.history.org or call 1-800-HISTORY.



Back row left to right: Bob Gay, Bill Jones, Marguerite Alley, Margery Howell, Kathy Bakely, Taylor Butler: Seated left to right: Sherry Munday, Patti Davis, Nancy Wood, Hazel Farkas. Not shown, Becki Dean - taking photo.

ernor's Palace, colonial craftsmen at work as printers, silversmiths, brickmakers, black-

Mark your calendars now. Don't miss this opportunity to meet with other deacons . . . and perhaps plan a vacation your whole family will enjoy.

AED Diaconal Assembly, Woodlands Hotel and Suites, Colonial Williamsburg, VA

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we would approach our convention presence. AED would not be there just to wave the deacon flag. We would try to offer the deacon’s prophetic voice, but more than that, to carry forth our own aspiration to engaging the diakonia of all believers.

Thus was born our convention theme “Looking Through a Diaconal Lens” and a cute way to illustrate that theme, the View-Master®. Our demographic of aging boomers will recognize the View-Master® as a mid-20th century forerunner to the slide show. Surprisingly they are still in production, with the only new technology being the use of digital photographs to make the image reels. Our real chore then was to transform some View-Masters® into a “diaconal” lens, that is, to present an image and show how it might be looked at “diaconally.”

As with any special viewing device, a “diaconal lens” helps you see more than what appears in the photograph, on the page, or in the scene before you. Looking at a disturbing picture of a crime scene or the wreckage caused by a natural disaster, you might also see the people involved, what they lost, what needs to be done to help rebuild lives, and who needs to get started on those tasks. Looking at a homeless person, you may see beyond stereotypes and immediate needs, to the individual’s needs for physical and emotional contact and perhaps a spiritual community. Looking at a picture of someone in fashionable clothes or staying at four star hotel, you may start envisioning where the clothes come from or who makes the hotel run – where they live and what material benefits they enjoy in their lives.

Aside from our convention booth side-show that convention-goers may or may not visit, our planning committee started thinking about what we could do to stimulate the Episcopal Church to think and act more diaconally. We found inspiration in a 20-year old experiment by the late Roman Catholic Bishop Kenneth E. Untener of Saginaw, Michigan, who decreed that for approximately three months, every church meeting at the diocesan or parish level, no matter what the purpose, would start with the agenda item “How will what we are doing here involve or affect the poor?” We know of this effort through Bishop Untener’s reflection piece “How Should We Think About the Poor?” published in Catholic Update and available online at <http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/ac0792.asp>.

Bishop Untener noted that never before had he talked about nor listened to so much about the poor. He said he learned a lot about the poor and how we think - or don’t think - about the poor. And he concluded the effort was a success, “. . . but it was like the success of someone who joined Weight Watchers and reached their goal by losing 37 pounds. They are congratulated, cheered . . . and given a pin [although] the true measure of success is whether they will change their eating habits in the weeks and months

As with any special viewing device, a “diaconal lens” helps you see more than what appears in the photograph, on the page, or in the scene before you.

and years ahead.” Bishop Untener also offered eight specific observations that help us start to think about the poor in diaconal terms.

- 1) We tend to forget the “poor” poor.
- 2) The poor are often “invisible.”
- 3) The biggest problem is the “undeserving poor.”
- 4) If you try to help the poor, you will sometimes get taken.
- 5) Helping the poor is not always a pleasant experience.
- 6) Food baskets at Thanksgiving, toys at Christmas are good as far as they go—but they don’t go very far.
- 7) Sometimes the poor are overwhelmed into inaction.
- 8) The poor also help the poor.

Bishop Untener offered a further explanation and mental note in response to each of the observations, which, rather than trying to paraphrase, I urge you to read for yourself.

AED has been trying to bring Bishop Untener’s experiment to the attention of the Episcopal Church for some time, and recently the Dioceses of Atlanta and Indianapolis adopted resolutions to begin their diocesan and parish-level meetings with an agenda item on how the contemplated business will affect or involve people living in poverty. In 2012, we decided it was time to take this on churchwide, and the board voted unanimously to seek the introduction

and adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved that the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church call upon its members to begin every meeting in calendar year 2013, whether at the parish, diocesan or church-wide level and no matter what the purpose, with this agenda item: “How will what we are doing here affect or involve people living in poverty?”

The board also voted unanimously to send a communication to bishops and convention deputies, not only to call their attention to the proposed resolution, but also urging them to think about people living in poverty when pondering the difficult resource and budgetary issues facing the Episcopal Church. The communication included a postcard with Mike Van’s familiar graphic (conceived by Vivienne Close) “The Way of the Prophet” on one side with these questions on the back:

Will you be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper? BCP p. 518

Will you do your best to pattern your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ? BCP p. 532

At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself. BCP p. 543

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? BCP p. 305

These questions were taken respectively from the ordination vows for bishops, priests, and deacons, and the baptismal covenant, to illustrate that all we are asking of ourselves is to do what we have already promised to do.

Shortly afterward the resolution was introduced by Bishop J. Michael Garrison, Assisting bishop in the Diocese of Southwest Florida and an AED Board member, with the endorsements of Bishop Cate Waynick of the Diocese of Indianapolis and Bishop Barry Beisner of the Diocese of Northern California. The board’s actions were also publicized in places such as Anglodeacons and Episcopal Café.

A couple of things should be noted about the resolution. It is not offered as a solution to poverty or as an effort to push poverty to forefront of the church’s agenda while pushing other needs and concerns to the side. It is an attempt to get the church to think diaconally about the poor, who indeed are always with us, and to make that part of our thinking in all we do. If we are truly willing to make friends with those living in poverty,

(See “*Diaconal Lens*” on Page Four)

To: The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church

From: The Board of Directors and Staff of the Association for Episcopal Deacons

By now many of you will have heard of our resolution, **B008**, to make those living in poverty part of the agenda of every church meeting and decision in 2013. The variety of comments we've received in response to this request of the church has been quite telling. "Who is not for motherhood and apple pie," some ask. "This is much too simple," say others. Yet others suggest, "We should be asking first about discipleship." And still others will remind us about the Five Marks of Mission.

How we think about the poor sometimes seems to be divorced from evangelism, discipleship, and dare we say it, formation. To some, how we use our resources to pay people, or to send them around the world, or to buy their vestments, or fund meetings most don't understand or benefit from, seems to have little to do with how we think about those living in poverty.

As we look through a diaconal lens, we'd like to suggest otherwise. We'd like to suggest that if we are truly willing to make friends with those living in poverty, as a response to the God who has loved us first, we might just see the relationship between how our resources are used, how we govern ourselves, and how the Gospel is to be made

visible in today's world. It is here that we might learn about evangelism, formation, and governance, as well as sharing bread and talents, buildings and other property.

For some of us, it seems too late to make much of a difference in the decisions of this triennial. Some of us are disappointed that we didn't learn from the last triennial, about stewardship, priority setting, and a need to take dramatic action. We are no longer talking about "thinking outside the box." We are not talking about moving beyond "business as usual." We are talking about the courage to take apart what gets in the way of this church becoming the servant structure we believe God's vision suggests.

Debating about what to take out and what to put back in seems not to be moving us forward. For example, were the dollars removed for Christian formation restored, we suspect not much would have been accomplished in the big picture. That is not to speak for or against formation; it is to say the budgeting process is ineffective. It is an example of something that needs to be taken apart. Not thoughtlessly. Not destructively. Carefully. And then reconstructed just as carefully.

At most deacon ordinations we hear these words from the first chapter of Jeremiah:

But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord." Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, now I have put my words in your mouth.

What we don't hear are the words in the verse that follows:

See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

Jeremiah's call, as the prophet, would involve "deconstructing" the realities and structures of unfaithful nations, as well as planting and promising hopeful new realities. We believe that is, in part, what is required of us now.

So just as we see making the poor an item on every agenda as a dramatic action that leads us to live what we believe, we suggest that there may be other dramatic actions to be considered. For instance –

--Is it time for zero-based budgeting? Would it make sense for every line item to be reviewed and reflected on through a Gospel

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as a response to the God who has loved us first, we might just see the relationship between how our resources are used, how we govern ourselves, and how the Gospel is to be made visible in today's world.

We suggest doing this for a calendar year --- nothing magical about that – but it's easy to follow, and the point is to make this a pattern and practice in our thinking rather than signify whether, how, or for how long we will prioritize people living in poverty in the ongoing life of the church. As those who have already adopted this practice can attest, beginning meetings this way can seem awkward and stilted at first, but as with any new discipline or exercise regimen, the point is to stretch the mind or body so that the practice eventually can become a natural part of our being.

Well before making our ways to Indianapolis we were presented with the further challenge of how to focus a diaconal lens on the proposed church budget. The initial document, released without an accurate explanation of the process or thinking behind its development, seemed to jettison the church's mission to the greater world at large, at least

at the national level, in favor of maintaining bishops and buildings. In a follow-up letter to the Church's Executive Committee (see above) AED noted, "Some of us are disappointed that we didn't learn from the last triennial about stewardship, priority setting, and a need to take dramatic action. We are no longer talking about 'thinking outside the box' [or] moving beyond 'business as usual.' We are talking about the courage to take apart what gets in the way of this church becoming the servant structure we believe God's vision suggests."

As a layperson and convert to the Episcopal Church (which makes me part of the majority of Episcopalians), I am intrigued by the diaconal lens that I see in my wife's work in campus and street ministries and maybe even my own early work as a poverty lawyer. I am also intrigued by the dilemma of the Episcopal Church, where we have inherited all of this great stuff from the days when everyone went to church on Sunday and we were the preferred denomination of the wealthy establishment. For the past 40 to 50 years we and other mainline Christian denominations have been fighting a losing battle to attract or retain members who can

help us retain our structures and traditions. Maybe like the young man in Mark 10:17-22, we are frustrated in our search for the kingdom of God because we are unwilling to just let go of our possessions and follow Jesus. You don't need to be a deacon to understand the message, but maybe it takes a diaconal lens to see your way through.

If you have made it to the end of this article and think you want to help AED help the Episcopal Church see the world through a diaconal lens, you can start by helping us gain passage of the resolution. Please contact the bishop (or bishops) and deputies from your diocese, as well as any other bishops and deputies you know to ask them to support the resolution. And don't think you have to wait for a church-wide mandate – you can ask your diocese or parish or any board or committee in which you participate to adopt a similar resolution and make thinking about and discussing how our actions affect and involve those living in poverty part of your own daily practice – a diaconal lens through which you see and engage your own community.

lens? Some of us are astounded that there are no salaries listed in some church budgets, including that of the budget church-wide. In zero-based budgeting, every line must be approved. Perhaps the church could make decisions more wisely were transparency more clearly a part of our process. Perhaps taking it apart and building it back up would help.

--What if, in rethinking subsidiarity (a term not easy for most to pronounce or understand – least of all those in our pews who have less than a high school education), we established an assessment tool for what is best achieved more locally and regionally, and then funded that work right there – not with church-wide staff? Perhaps some of the

many effective networks that have sprung up because of needs that were not being filled church-wide could receive more of the resources they need.

--What if we were to bring in “discernmentarians” instead of parliamentarians to lead our church-wide gatherings. What if we were to eliminate legislation and voting, for at least one General Convention? What if, as a part of every day, we engaged in direct service or advocacy, or listened to the stories of what people who live in poverty and with other challenges have to say to us in our deliberations? Perhaps taking it apart, as we know it, and building it back up, would help.

Even as we look through a diaconal lens, we know these things will not happen strictly as we suggest. But we pray that you look through a diaconal lens with us. We believe that the state of the church is every bit as much an issue in contemporary society as the state of our economy and our democracy. We believe that issues of race and class permeate our budgeting process and our governance, including who can attend our meetings, or whether they are truly accessible. But we also believe we can change. And we urge you on as you deliberate. We are praying for you. And we are praying for those who are waiting to hear our Good News.

Sermon – Launch of NetsforLife Campaign

By The Ven. Joanne Leslie, Archdeacon, Diocese of Los Angeles

Much of the Gospel of Mark is very abbreviated, almost like bullet points for a fuller story Mark intended to write later. The Gospel reading we heard this morning (*Mark 1:9-15*) sounds like what I believe people in Hollywood call a “treatment” (not that I really know much about how the entertainment business works, despite having lived in Los Angeles for over 20 years). But basically what Mark gives us is three quick scene sketches. First Jesus arrives from Galilee to be baptized in the River Jordan and after being baptized a voice from heaven declares, “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.” Then Jesus is whisked off to the desert for 40 days where he is tempted by Satan and waited on by angels. Then after John is arrested, Jesus returns to Galilee where he begins preaching repentance and proclaiming good news. Mark rapidly sketches these moments in the early ministry of Jesus, leaving us to fill in the details.

It’s much the same with the season of Lent. Church tradition gives us the outline but each year we have to fill in the details. The observance of a period of fasting and preparation prior to Easter goes back to the earliest days of the church. And once Christianity was legalized in the 4th century, Lent was officially established at the famous Council of Nicea. This is how Lent is explained at the Ash Wednesday service, which I am sure many of you attended:

“The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord’s passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to

the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful, were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the church.”

In recognition of Moses’ 40 days on Mt. Sinai and Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness, the church set the period of Lent to be 40 days. Denominations calculate the forty days slightly differently. In the Episcopal Church, our 40 days go from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, with Sundays not counted. During Lent, there are three traditional practices that we are expected to take up with renewed vigor: prayer (justice towards God), fasting (justice towards self), and almsgiving (justice towards neighbor). Many people give up something for Lent (I always give up wine). People may also add something or take up another kind of Lenten discipline (this year I decided I would not access the internet on Sundays). The idea is not that God admires our self-sacrifice, but rather that these disciplines will free up time and energy for our spiritual lives. If our Lenten discipline saves money, the expectation is that we will contribute this money to charity.

So that is the general outline of Lent that tradition gives us. However, each year we need to fill in the details to make it a meaningful personal experience. This year our Presiding Bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schori has urged all Episcopalians to focus on the Millennium Development Goals for Lent. In her 2012 Lent message, Bishop Katherine says:

“As you pray through the forty days of Lent, I encourage you to attend to the needs of those with the least around the world. I would invite you to study, both about how human beings live in other parts of the world and our own responsibility as Christians. . . . I invite you to consider your alms-giving discipline this Lent and remember those in the developing world who go without.”

Here in the Diocese of Los Angeles, we have selected an even more specific focus: MDG 6, to reduce the global burden of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. For Lent 2012, our Bishops have invited (challenged, really) the whole diocesan community to join the Nets for Life campaign. This is a joint effort with Episcopal Relief and Development to halt the spread of malaria. Long-lasting insecticide-treated nets, if used widely and appropriately, have been shown to significantly reduce deaths from malaria. Our ambitious but completely doable diocesan goal is to raise 40,000 mosquito nets in 40 days.

Let me tell you a little about malaria from my personal experience. I have spent my career in preventive health, most of it working on public health issues in developing countries. I’ve had the good fortune to be involved in research and service delivery projects around the world, from Nepal to Kenya to Brazil. However most of my international work has been concentrated in the French speaking countries of West Africa. (Perhaps if I come back to St. Mike’s another time to talk with you more about deacons and the diaconate, I can tell you how my work in West Africa led directly to recog-

(See “Leslie” on Page Ten)

Living the Covenant and Equipping the Saints: Not to be confused with ministry methods, congregational development, or any other gimmick ©

by *Susanne Watson Epting, Executive Director of AED, Diocese of Iowa*

The emphasis on this issue is a long time in coming. But I think it comes at a good time . . . a time when those who participate in the more institutional structures of our church (General Convention, church-wide staff, Executive Council) are discerning how best to reform. What I would suggest is that we have, for several decades, been in the process of reformation. Perhaps the stories here will help us take heart. They'll show us that the willingness to do things differently is cause for celebration. Perhaps they'll debunk the myth that alternative ways of living the covenant and equipping the saints is only for small congregations and small dioceses. Many of these stories indicate the "missional" thinking that has become so popular with the emergent movement. It's not new to many who have been part of the stories here, but we're glad if this way of thinking is becoming popular.

There's a very long history behind what was known as "total ministry." Some people still call it that. I tend to talk about ministry development as a part of mission and that leads to mission. I asked a colleague, a while back, why we still need modifiers like "total" ministry, or "shared" ministry, or "total common" ministry. I've concluded that it's because the very idea of the radical equality that comes from baptism for all God's ministers and missionaries, has not yet overcome the habits of life dictated by a culture that does not understand these things. My colleague suggested something similar – this movement was not about any particular method, but about a radical re-visioning of the church. Someone once asked me what I thought the single biggest obstacle to "total ministry" was. "Conversion," I said.

I realize that my own frame of reference is important to define – in part because it is one person's lived experience of the orientation toward "living the covenant." I know now, after looking back, that my experiences are not necessarily common, but that they reflect what others have lived, or at least wondered about, as alternatives to the one-priest/one-parish, "pastoral" models in which the church continues to be so invested.

I have never known any Prayer Book but the one we're using now. Within two years

after becoming an Episcopalian, my family joined a congregation that was known by an unusual name. It was called *The Community of St. Francis*. From 1979 to 1990, my experience of the Episcopal Church was primarily in that community in which:

There was no full time priest.

There was no owned building.

Lay readers (as they were known at the time) planned every liturgy, including the



music. They found the people who would read the lessons. They made sure that if no priest were available, and sometimes when one was, that there was a sermon from someone in the congregation. When no priest was available to preside at the Eucharist, they conducted the Liturgy of the Word rather than Morning Prayer. When a priest was available to preside at the Eucharist, the reader/officiant led the service up to the point of The Holy Communion.

The congregation sang *a cappella*. (And some learned naturally to read music that way.)

Rather than paying for a full time priest and a building, resources were shared with the local community, the nation and the world. Some resources went to paying a part time administrator.

Children and adults engaged in ministry together, knew each other by name, asked about each other's welfare, and most everything was intergenerational.

Children knew themselves to be engaged in ministry – not just adults.

There was very little moral support from other Episcopal congregations or the diocese.

What we learned, over time, was that it was hard to buck City Hall. While there were years that the community grew and thrived, there were also some rough spots. There was little help available during those times, and after a series of bumps, and no help, we were tired. When we were at the stage of our greatest fatigue, we had a sympathetic bishop, and a diocesan staff member finally told us about other communities who were beginning to do what we'd always done. By then, however, it was too late. After a year-long process of discernment, (before discernment had re-entered the church vocabulary), we joined the traditional parish in town with the hope that we might serve as "leaven" in the more traditional community. I believe we were.

The welcome by the new community made it easier. I believe that together we saw the expanded community become more oriented toward the ministry of all the baptized. We saw outreach efforts increase. Unfortunately it was harder for our children than for anyone else because, I'm sad to say, we didn't do a good job of including them in our discernment. They suddenly became anonymous students in a new Sunday school, separated from other generations, and had fewer intergenerational opportunities. They reminded us that they weren't sure about their own ministries in this new set-up.

How I miss that community.

But what is important here is a glimpse of what is possible – and perhaps what is not possible. The fact is an alternative community was possible. It was viable. And when it wasn't, it discerned how best to move forward. The story is about how the church – at large – receives different ways of thinking and being. What if neighboring congregations and diocesan resources had been brought to bear in that alternative

community not only in the bumpy, tired stages, but in the vibrant and viable ones? Might something completely different have emerged?

“Emergent” is popular. What does that really mean? How does our theology (which we like to claim so often as baptismal) guide us toward dying and rising in all of life? Toward not being afraid of death? And perhaps less dramatic – not being afraid of change? What does it mean to be hospitable to change? To make space for what is emerging? What does it mean to receive the gifts and ideas of all the faithful in ways that connect them powerfully to the One who goes with them outside the walls of the church? For I am fully convinced that if our faith makes no difference to the world, it deserves to be questioned. If our institutional well-being takes away from initiatives to heal our communities, it is no wonder so many of our congregations are being pastored by hospice chaplains presiding over their slow demise.

What do we not understand about the meaning of radical equality in baptism? In a time when we justify so many of our corporate decisions by using the baptismal covenant, how do we miss the fact that it is incumbent on us to use that same covenant to equip the saints in daily life for ministry and mission in every place in the community? Doing one without the other makes me wonder if we are not using the Covenant to justify policies in a top-down world without equipping the saints whose actions, daily, are most likely to change the world.

As deacons, we look through a lens that invites change. Whenever we interpret to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world, I suspect we invite change. We could not do what we do, nor could others with diaconal hearts, did we not see gifts in unlikely places and people. That is what the church asks us to do, is it not?

So how does this relate to all these stories about “mutual ministry?”

It is my hope that we will see, undergirding all these stories, a theology, indeed a faith, that empowers, equips, affirms, and sends. One that builds partnerships and which understands a more horizontal way of life. As you read, I’d invite you to consider some things that provide a framework that makes space for difference, change, emergence, being the church outside its walls, making it a partner in the community, instead of assuming it is the center of the universe.

The framework I share here is not new.

Some of you have seen it before. In the nearly 30 years I’ve spent in ministry development, the framework is tweaked from time to time, but its essence is the same. So here are some things to consider.¹

One of the first things I think is critical to that framework is a common understanding of ministry. Ministry is an outcome, a response, a way of life, a way of being that includes doing. It is a response in love, a result of being in relationship with God. And ministry is likely to be a natural result if the following two things are in place. First, it is important to know ourselves as God’s beloved...to be conscious enough of that loving relationship that we want to respond to God. What might it look like for us to create an experience of baptism in which we circle the font and welcome the newly baptized with, “You are God’s beloved – in whom God is well pleased!”

A second important step toward our understanding of and the making of ministry is that we must know what it means to be community. In our case, because I’m talking about a theology of ministry rooted in baptism, I’d like us to think about ourselves as a baptizing community, a people seeking to “live the covenant,” together and to be intentional in being present to each other through

What does it mean to receive the gifts and ideas of all the faithful in ways that connect them powerfully to the One who goes with them outside the walls of the church?

little deaths and little resurrections, through miracles and tragedies, through promises made and broken, with each other and with God. Henri Nouwen once suggested that we think about community “as something that is incarnated, not organized, not programmed. Think of community as the place where the Christ in you sees the Christ in others,” he said, “and we are there, in the name of Jesus, for each other, as companions who affirm and strengthen each other in the knowledge of God’s first love.”² What we call ministry – or how we engage in mission – does not happen outside the context of community, of relationships with others.

One of my favorite books describes a helpful sponsor for baptism as one who: is

able to tell of their own pain and sorrow... who believes that God is present and active in the lives of all people (not just that some people have it and some don’t)...who is someone who can see the image of God in every human being...a person who doesn’t see the world as being split between the physical and the spiritual...and who feels good about being a child of God, a member of the human family, and a part of the Body of Christ...someone who cannot be shocked and is willing to know both the shadows inside as well as the light...who can tell stories about being a Christian...and who has a love/hate relationship with the church and can be honest about it.³

That’s an apt description of a good ministry developer... and most fundamentally, a good Christian. I would hope that as members of congregations, we could be a community of sponsors like that, one for another. That, I believe, is what it means to be a baptizing community. And those things are present, an understanding of what it means to be chosen, to be God’s beloved, along with an understanding of and membership in a baptizing community that reminds us that God delights in us, that looks for the Christ in each other, that is intentional about “living the covenant” together, then ministry and mission will simply flow from that. Then we go into the world from a place of strength.

I believe that is how we become a missional church. But we need to start with some basics. Some of us call it ministry development. Others call it equipping the saints. But what it boils down to, is that in a theology of ministry rooted in baptism (rather than ordination), we assume that our first call to ministry comes at baptism. We share in ministry with each other. It’s sometimes a challenge for people in our congregations to understand ministry in any other way but the ministry of the ordained. So sometimes we have to work hard at redefining that – and that does require **us** to understand what sharing means! So what does it mean to think about shared ministry?

Quite simply, I believe that shared ministry, first of all, is a reminder that it is Christ’s ministry we share. It is a reminder that no one kind of person has a corner on the ministry market. It is a description of what it means for the community to live in a way that affirms that God has given us all gifts to share. And while its definition sometimes seems elusive, I like to think that, that points to a fluid definition and understanding of

(See “Living the Covenant” on Page Eight)

(Living the Covenant” from Page Seven)

ministry, that is evolving and dynamic. But while its definition may not be concise, there are at least principles and ideals and theology that guide its evolution.

The Living Stones Diocesan Partnership, a partnership of several dioceses in The Episcopal Church, along with dioceses in The Anglican Church of Canada, is committed to shared ministry as a diocesan strategy. Their covenant is helpful in at least beginning to define what we mean when we say we believe in shared ministry. What they say is that they are a “partnership of dioceses engaged in Christian mission, committed to the ministry of all the baptized.” Their covenant further states:

We acknowledge that God works through all people, all times, and all circumstances. The principles that we affirm are that:

All Christian ministry is rooted in the Covenant of Baptism;

As we reshape ministry we will seek to be congruent with Scripture, and informed and guided by tradition, reason and experience;

The Christian Church is a ministering community whose effectiveness is measured not merely by numbers, but by the quality of life we share;

We recognize a variety of ministries, including locally trained and ordained priests, deacons and other ministers; (seminary not required)

We affirm the importance of a covenant of learning, which provides for initial education and training, as well as for continuing education. (raising the education bar for everyone)

Therefore we commit ourselves:

- to use discernment processes to identify gifts for ministry;
- to nurture and support all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ;
- to offer innovative thinking for leadership and organizational structures that encourage shared/mutual ministry, as appropriate in each diocese;
- to provide training as leadership is reconfigured in conjunction with our stated principles.”⁴

Nowhere in that covenant does it describe total or mutual or shared ministry as a method. It is not simply about providing locally ordained leadership for small and struggling congregations. It does not provide a formula for ministry configurations inside the church’s walls. It is a vision for the church, a framework that helps us see a glimpse of how we might “live the covenant,” in a joyous multitude of ways that unite us in the mission of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. (BCP p.855)

As Tim Sedgwick, professor at Virginia Theological Seminary, has written about shared ministry: “As with all renewals or reformations, this vision of the Church seeks and claims to draw us back to Christian faith, in this case to draw us back from a clericalized, institutionalized church seeking its own preservation...Ministry is then not something the ordained do for others or that which is done for the sake of the Church. Ministry is the life of faith lived out in the world. And the concerns for ministry development are focused on what is needed to make this understanding a reality...”⁵

So here we are in this issue that describes different ways of being diaconal ministers, engaging in diaconal ministry, and revisiting the church. Perhaps you can take whatever you learn from this issue into your diocesan structures – to commissions on ministry. That seems to be where we often hit a point of tension in our ongoing reformation, because what we’ve been talking about here is affirming the gifts and ministry of every baptized person. Making a missional church – one that doesn’t need the walls of the church for its definition. And most of the time, at least in many Commissions on Ministry our time is spent on people and procedures that have to do with ordination.

If we don’t take the time to name these issues and create space for them, we remain driven by the ordination process. Despite our good intentions, we all have a “default mode.” And that’s frequently where we return, not out of wanting to be stuck or resistant (well at least not all the time) but because it’s the way we’ve always done it. So we need time to dream and pray and ask what God’s longing is in this place and time in our church and in our world. And as those who have been charged to interpret to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world, and to show others that in serving they serve Christ himself – perhaps the prior question is always, “How does what we’re doing as a church strengthen others to go forth, to engage confidently in ministry and mission?” And “what effect does who we are have on the world – the whole world – those who are sick, poor, imprisoned, lonely, dying?” What effect indeed?

(Endnotes)

1 This content has been used in teaching and speaking in many venues since the 1980’s.

2 Shared from comments made by Henri Nouwen at a retreat at the School for Servant Leadership in Washington, D.C., October 1992.

3 The Catechumenal Process, Office and

Evangelism Ministries of the Episcopal Church, Church Hymnal Corporation, published 1990, p. 103.

4 From the “Covenant for the Living Stones Diocesan Partnership,” drafted by Living Stones Coordinators in Minneapolis in May of 1996, accepted by the partners at the annual meeting in 1997, and amended in 1998.

5 From “Vision and Collaboration: Roland Allen, Liturgical Renewal, and Ministry Development,” by Timothy Sedgwick, as published in the *Anglican Theological Review*, LXXXII:1 (Spring 2000), p. 156.



Mutual Ministry: An Integral Sacramental Vision

By The Rev. Kevin G. Thew Forrester, Ph.D.,
Ministry Developer, Diocese of Northern Michigan

Over the past 25 years Mutual Ministry has evolved from being concerned primarily with changing church systems so that we might be able to set a table in the wilderness (which means, any community developing the capacity to identify, call forth, and nurture gifts for ministry). Now, the questions are: Who are we, those who are setting this table? Why do we set this table and what are people hungry for?

The mystics, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Julian of Norwich, understood that as human beings we exist for one reason – to realize our union with God; our tradition speaks of this process as one of transforming *theosis* or divinization. In the words of Maximus the Confessor: “For what is more desirable to God’s precious one than to be divinized, that is for God to be united with those who have become god and by his goodness to make everything his own.” We set God’s table because human beings long to be fed, that is, to be unified, with God; God, the Beloved, who longs to feed us (to be united with us).

Today, I understand Mutual Ministry to represent an integral approach to transformation, in that we pay attention to four interrelated areas of human/leadership development: personal transformation, skills development, congregation/community formation, and systems change. There are many different ways to develop these four areas. What I would like to focus on, however, is the integral sacramental vision that undergirds, guides and nurtures *theosis* within community.

A principal gift of Mutual Ministry to the church is a post-modern 21st century Christianity that is graced, integral, collaborative, sapiential; a vision of community rooted in our primary human hunger for wholeness; a vision of community that flows from the dynamic life offered in Christ’s open table. For Mutual Ministry, God is the Ground of life and this Ground is the font for an integral sacramental vision – a realization that all creation is sacred. In other words, Mutual Ministry represents a post-modern vision of Christian community that draws from and builds upon the Wisdom found in the dissident voice of many of our mystics. We affirm that all creation is a gift drawing us to the table of God, where God longs to feed and nurture us in all ways. We in turn do the same.

God’s Ground

Within early Syriac Christianity, Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism in the Jordan “to give life,” “to make alive,” “to cause to live”; Jesus is experienced and known as the “Life-Giver” (*Ihidaya*). Jesus is the Life-Giver because this faithful Jew from Nazareth has awakened to his union with God and creation. In the Syriac text Jesus is often referred to as “the unified one.” Jesus reveals the path of life because he directly experiences and knows his union, his at-onement, with God and creation. As his friends, Jesus invites us to walk this same path.

Genesis 1:26 celebrates that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. The Orthodox have insightfully and playfully interpreted this verse to mean that we are created in God’s image and called to become God’s very likeness. Divinization, or *theosis*, is why we have been called into being. Each person is to realize that their Source of life and identity is the living Font. *Theosis* is the process of realizing our given union with God and creation and thereby becoming in turn of the Source of life for the world.

Baptism is a sacrament of initiation that invites us on the life journey of living from and into our common true Center – union with God and one another. The contemporary mystic Bruno Barnhart, in *The Future of Wisdom*, describes this as fontal life. Baptism confirms the deepest and widest truth about life – we are, we exist, in and through and of, the divine saturating Presence. We begin to realize for ourselves and speak a theology and ministry consonant with the reality experienced by the mystic/martyr Marguerite Porete – “and because He is everywhere, this Soul finds Him everywhere. All things are fitting for her, for she does not find anything anywhere but that she finds God there.”

Mutual Ministry is then a way of speaking about our fontal life. Each and every creature flows forth as a word on the breath of God. We are, as Meister Eckhart would say, a “word of God.” Mutual Ministry is rooted in the truth described so marvelously by Eckhart: “God’s ground is my ground, and my ground is God’s ground.” There is only one, common, graced, divine Ground from which all life flows: God. God, who is Love, freely flows out and creation is what comes into being; a creation that lives, moves, and has being only insofar as it expresses its gracious

Ground. Once we understand that fontal life is our gracious true nature, ministry becomes our incarnation of this true nature in daily life. Incarnation begets incarnation, which is simply another way of speaking about the unfolding/evolving reign of God.

Here we encounter a wonderful mix of metaphor: our divine Ground is the *flowing* life of God, symbolized in the water of baptism. The Ground of God is not hard and harsh, but fluid and forgiving and teaming with life. The Ground of God eternally flows and receives in love. No separation, no division, no competition – a unity of mind-boggling diversity and stunning beauty. Knowledge of our true nature engenders trust and creativity, rather than fear-dominated control.

Mutual Ministry is a way of being community that helps us to embody who we truly are: living, creative, collaborative, words of God. Ministries are diverse, but always one; each with its own beauty expressed as a way of realizing personal divine likeness. Whatever the character of the ministry, be it iconically diaconal, apostolic or priestly, each refracts the same Light, yet in myriad beautiful ways.

Because all ministry is fontal and flows from the same Source, a distinctive characteristic of Mutual Ministry is that formation of all ministries occurs together, in community. Deacons, preachers, artists, teachers, priests, etc., all receive training and education proper to their calling. But no one and no ministry is separated from the others. This means that the distinct training required for any particular ministry is offered to all through a commonly shared formation process (which in the Diocese of Northern Michigan follows the integral path of *LifeCycles*). Formation and transformation transpire primarily within the local congregation, which itself gradually realizes its diaconal, apostolic and priestly character. Seminary-trained Diocesan Ministry Developers are the midwives of this process, assisting in the continual rebirth of ministry in Christ in community.

Fontal living is also inherently eucharistic. Christian life is a life of gratefulness (described so well by David Steindl-Rast). The prodigal and unconditional divine generosity is symbolized in Jesus’ practice of an open table. God gives without regard, asking only that we be living words willing to receive our sustenance (symbolized in the bread and wine) from the sole Font of life. We realize

(See “Forrester” on Page Ten)

("Forrester" from Page Nine)

that God desires to feed us simply because we are the Beloved's very own body and we hunger to be filled through and through by God. The Beloved feeds us simply because we long for union with the One from whom all life proceeds. Eucharist thus initiates us. The Eucharist exists because the Ground itself *is* eucharistic. Christ's open table simply and immediately incarnates God's open heart, which in turn asks us to open all our "tables" to all who hunger. Justice and service are embodiments or sacraments of gratitude. The reign of God is thus manifest in and through the Christic open table in the face of those powers of domination that would restrict access to God's unbounded loving presence through the imposition of conditions. The open eucharistic table testifies to the unquestioned gracious character of God and the radical hospitality informing all ministry.

An Integral Sacramental Vision

Mutual Ministry reflects what I describe as an "integral sacramental vision." (See my books *Holding Beauty in My Soul's Arms* and *My Heart is a Raging Volcano of Love for You*). This integral sacramental vision has deep roots in our dissident mystic heritage and it offers Mutual Ministry a way through the modern and post-modern divorce of the sacred and the secular. This integral sacramental vision, at once eucharistic and baptismal, weaves a path for renewing Christianity in such a way that it embodies a rediscovery of the Divine Center that is the Holy Source of all life and ministry.

An integral sacramental vision *invites us to taste God everywhere*. Here we move beyond the Anselmian theism which separates the Beloved from creation; we move beyond an overly simplified pantheism that would collapse the transcendent into the sum of the parts; we become saturated with a sacramental view that re-integrates sacred and secular, for all creation exists only to the degree it manifests God. Service, outreach, hospitality, are all expressions of grace offered to a graced creation. Sunday Eucharist is an instance of the cosmic eucharist, where life itself is the table of God.

This integral sacramental vision *invites us to see God in everything*. Here we move beyond the dualities of sacred/secular and supernatural/natural, which have been driving post-Enlightenment western culture, into a re-integrated sacramental worldview. History, as it is, is supernatural, for all things exist only insofar as the Beloved exists in and as them. History is epiphanic. To see is to see the Holy. Sin is our blindness to creation's

gracious true nature. Prophetic justice seeks to restore our sight that we might fully value and embrace the divine beauty of whoever stands before us.

An integral sacramental vision *invites us to know ourselves as community*. Here we move beyond Modernity's ideology of the "rugged individual"; we move beyond Post-modernity's ideology of fragmented particularity; we recover and renew the wisdom of the mystics that all is in and of the Spirit as one. Since each and every creature is a word of God, ministry is an expression of respect of the dignity of every creature. Radical respect becomes an expression of gratefulness, rather than an imposed obligation. Ministry is never an individual possession, but an expression of community identity.

An integral sacramental vision *invites us to move from fear of God and creation to a basic trust in a Divine ever-present and dynamic*, which empowers each of us, as words of God, to live creatively *as* the Word. An integral sacramental vision *invites us to be transformed from the image into the very likeness of God*: trinitarian communities characterized by the Gospel revelation that "friendship" lies at the heart of liturgy and ministry. All ministers are integral members of their communities, wherein friendship and support are known. We in turn befriend a world isolated through alienation.

Because the Beloved is the Alpha and Omega, the Source and the End, of all creation; and because we live, move, and have our being in a Font of boundless love; an integral sacramental vision recognizes that we live in a world in which every manifestation of truth, beauty, and goodness comes from the Beloved and leads to the Beloved and is thus sacred and holy. The very nature and dynamic of life itself is trinitarian: all comes from the Holy Source, and we return all with hearts of gratefulness. One *kenotic* (ego-empty) Dance of Gratefulness.

This integral sacramental vision informing Mutual Ministry helps guide diaconal, apostolic and priestly ministries in a 21st century world torn asunder by ethnic intolerance, religious dogmatism and tribal conflict. For an integral sacramental vision, we cannot help but guard as sacred the many different paths into the Beloved, the Font of all Life. Our sense of prophetic justice, service and hospitality begins to reflect hearts that are as ready to hear the good news from God's people of all faiths as they are to proclaim the Christian Gospel. The very goodness of the Gospel asks no less. We are called to become those whose lives are living words that heal false divisions, celebrate diversity, and pursue common mission. This eucha-

ristic and baptismal ministry of healing *is* the way of Jesus. Mutual Ministry, with its integral sacramental vision, thus invites us to be a community of *kenotic* followers of Jesus whose Ground is the living God.

("Leslie" from Page Five)

nizing my call to be ordained as a deacon). Almost all of my international work was done while living in the United States, which meant frequent trips trying to cram as much work into as short a time as possible. I can't remember a single trip to West Africa that wasn't affected by malaria. Sometimes an African colleague was out sick with an acute attack of malarial fever. Or someone arrived late every day because they were taking care of a family member sick with malaria. Too often, a team member was missing because he or she had to travel to another part of the country for the funeral of a family member who had died of malaria. In West Africa, malaria is as common as the cold or flu are for us, but with much more dire consequences. Fortunately I never got malaria myself. But I have watched people shiver and sweat in the throes of a malarial fever. And I have visited a hospital ward full of children dying from malaria. These are not scenes you forget easily.

Of all the countries where I've worked in West Africa, my favorite is Burkina Faso. I was most recently in Burkina Faso in 2004. On this trip I went with an organization, Freedom From Hunger, which partners with local credit unions to provide micro loans combined with health and business education to very low-income rural women. We visited small towns in the region around Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso.

I remember particularly meeting with three *animatrices*, local women who had been trained as community outreach workers. Andrea, Leonie and Edith-Marie explained that some education modules were not received well by the women (the ones on HIV/AIDS for example). But they said that the education modules on prevention of malaria and diarrhea were very popular. The women knew that malaria and diarrhea were big threats to the health of their children and they were eager to learn more. Most of the women, it turned out, were amazed to learn that mosquitoes transmitted malaria.

On this trip I also had a chance to talk first hand with some village women who were participating in the education module on malaria prevention and treatment. In one village I met with women in a solidarity group called "God is with Us". The women

(See "Leslie" on Page Twelve)

Mutual Ministry - also known as “Collaborative Ministry,” “Total Ministry,” “Baptismal Ministry”

by Gail Baravetto, formerly diaconal coordinator, Holy Trinity Church, Iron Mountain, Michigan

Mutual Ministry – two words that raised many questions and concerns for me when I first heard them. Two of the questions that crossed my mind were “Aren’t those the things we pay our Priests to do?” and “Why would you expect members of the congregation to do those things?” I thought the church was there for me to attend on Sundays, holidays, and any time I might need something. Why would I want to spend my time doing that, after all I worked full-time and had my own interests?

Several months later, after first hearing about Mutual Ministry, I visited churches that were involved in it. I met Deacons, Diaconal Ministry Coordinators, Priests, Preachers, Ecumenical Coordinators, Worship Coordinators, etc. In every one of the congregations there was excitement and commitment to the things they were accomplishing. People were growing in their understanding of God’s presence in their lives and in their communities. They were waking up to what it meant to be “the baptized” and to model their lives on the Baptismal Covenant. They worked together, contributing ideas and supporting each other. Someone would come up with an idea and before you knew it, there were several others who were supporting it and adding their suggestions on how to improve it. For example, Deacons served as visible “icons” and “reminders” of the servant ministry of all the baptized, while Diaconal Ministry Coordinators used their organizing skills, often behind the scenes, to mobilize the congregation’s response to needs near and far. Their roles were complementary not competitive, fluid not fixed. It didn’t take long for my concerns and questions to be addressed. There were unique relationships within the congregations, people enjoyed what they were doing and supported each other as they forged new paths. Since I was very interested in outreach ministries, I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to work on projects with the help of friends. Over time I became a strong supporter of Mutual Ministry!

Since our congregation had a “rector,” we were slower to see the possibilities of

Mutual Ministry. We thought it was only for those smaller congregations without their own priest. Slowly but surely, however, we began to see that Mutual Ministry had much to offer us as well. When Holy Trinity Church decided to become involved with Mutual Ministry there were some stressful

unique “gifts” and although our gifts were often hidden from us, they were obvious to others. It was not uncommon for people to react with “Who me?” and “Are you sure I can do that?” Unlike the usual process found throughout the church, individuals did not “put themselves forward” for discernment.

Rather, the community “discerned,” often to a person’s surprise.

After people accepted the offer to join the first “covenant group,” the 3½ year learning and training process began. Twice monthly meetings were held during which we prayed, studied, and grew using the *LifeCycles* materials created by our diocese in cooperation with other dioceses and organizations committed to “baptismal ministry.” The Ministry Developer did not lead the sessions but everyone took turns with the various leadership roles, often working in pairs so that we would come to understand that ministry was best when shared. This formation process allowed us to bond with one another, to become more comfortable with each other, and to affirm the ministries to which each person was called. We became each other’s support system, discussed our ideas for growth, how the lessons we just studied could help us become more effective, and, in particular, how our lives were being transformed. As the *LifeCycles* subtitle put it, “Christian formation in community.” After our long period of preparation, we were all “commissioned” by the bishop during a wonderful liturgy during which deacons and priests were

ordained. Once commissioned, we became a Ministry Support Team

We started to grow in ways we never imagined were possible before Mutual Ministry. We also discovered we could be involved in many more projects than when we had a priest in charge of everything. The priest was only one person and had a limited amount of time. Besides, who could expect the priest to be involved in every aspect of our congregation’s mission and ministry? We all started expanding our interests, supported and encouraged each other to grow, and no one worked alone. New life was breathed

(See “Baravetto” on Page Twelve)



Gail on mission trip to Honduras

times, even though we moved slowly and deliberately with a great deal of education and reflection. Some people didn’t want anything to do with it, and yet others knew this was where we had to go, even *wanted* to go. After much discussion, a “discovery” committee was formed by the vestry and made up of vestry members and others with a deep knowledge of the congregation. With the help of an “outside” consultant they gathered to discern those who possessed gifts for ministry, and for which roles. The idea was not to fill “pigeon holes” but to discover signs that ministries were already present. It became apparent that we all had

“Baravetto” from Page Eleven

into our small congregation. It was extremely important to always update and inform other members of the congregation on what we were doing and learning. Mutual Ministry helped create an environment where members of the congregation were working together for the good of our church. Often, when we looked back, we realized we were already doing the ministries we were selected to do, just without the title. Even members of the congregation who were not part of the Ministry Support Team began to take on ministries more willingly. It was as if Mutual Ministry was contagious and not just limited to a small group.

I was called to be a Diaconal Ministry Coordinator and an Ecumenical Coordinator. These were areas where I had a great deal of interest and enthusiasm. I enjoyed working on and coordinating outreach projects. I found that when a person had a passion for something, it was easy to get people to work as partners. I felt I had a responsibility to reach out to those who were in need, and I found a group of people interested in the same things. I also enjoyed learning about and working with other denominations, discovering that the things we had in common were much greater than our differences. One project that our Ecumenical Coordinators were involved with was “Earth Day.” Many denominations from around the Upper Peninsula got together in their local communities and collected old, used, outdated items that could be detrimental to the environment. They are either recycled or disposed of in an environmentally safe way. We also became involved in missions beyond our own congregation, like building houses in Honduras and helping people in Haiti recover from the earthquake. Mutual Ministry also encouraged our diocese to become more interested in outreach, mission, and ministries of peace and justice.

Since Holy Trinity’s first Ministry Support team, we had two more groups go through the formation process. As a result we had Priests, Preachers, Deacons, Diaconal Ministry Coordinators, Ecumenical Coordinators, Hospitality Coordinators, Education Coordinators, Catechumenal Coordinators, Stewardship Coordinators and Worship Coordinators. It was very rewarding to see that a small congregation had so many dedicated people, and that included members who were not involved with, but supportive of, Mutual Ministry.

Mutual Ministry was not without controversy. We had members who left Holy Trinity because they were not comfortable

with the new direction, but we also had people join us because of Mutual Ministry. I believe Mutual Ministry can be beneficial for any size congregation. Mutual Ministry was meant to honor and support the uniqueness of each person and each community of the diocese. For congregations with a priest, Mutual Ministry was not intended to take away responsibilities, but to expand the possibilities for mission and ministry of every church. For those churches without a seminary educated priest, it allowed them to continue to have a rich and full life of worship, learning and service to the local community and the world.

“Leslie” from Page Ten

were especially excited to learn about the correct dosage of chloroquine to be used to treat malaria in different ages of children. They said that until this education module came, they felt like the pharmacists were keeping a secret from them, just selling them chloroquine without explaining how to use it. Now that they had reliable information about the right dosages, they felt more confident using them for their children and providing advice to other family members and to their neighbors. It was clear that this project was effectively engaged in empowerment of women as well as malaria education.

At the time of this trip to Burkina Faso, insecticide-treated mosquito nets were quite new. In fact the technology was pretty primitive. We did distribute bed nets in the villages we visited. They were similar to this untreated net. In each village, the *animatrices* would demonstrate how to mix up the insecticide, dip the net in and hang it out to dry. That takes a lot of effort and even once people understood the risk posed by mosquito bites, we were still not confident how many would really appropriately prepare and use the nets. But in the years since 2004 the technology has improved greatly. Long-lasting insecticide-treated nets that remain effective for at least 3 years, are now mass-produced in factories at very low cost. Today we can deliver a LLIN to a rural African family along with malaria prevention education for only \$12. Given that each net saves up to 3 lives, they represent a very cost-effective public health intervention.

I’m a parent and a grandparent. Many of you are also. Picture a baby or toddler you especially love and then think about this. There are 31 countries in the world where over 10% of the children die before their 5th birthday. All but one of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. And what are these

children dying of? There are many causes, including diarrhea and pneumonia, but a major cause of child mortality is malaria. Worldwide there are 250 million cases of malaria leading to 1 million deaths. And the vast majority of those deaths are young children in Africa.

Statistics like this can be numbing. We may say to ourselves: “it’s horrible, it’s unfair, but what can I do?” Well I’m here to tell you there is something you can do. Let’s say that you are giving up wine or café lattes for Lent. Estimating conservatively, you will be saving about \$3 a day. \$3 a day times 40 days is \$120, which means you’ve saved enough money to purchase ten mosquito nets. By providing ten nets, you will have prevented up to 30 deaths from malaria. Most of the lives you save will be children under the age of 5.

Our reading today from Genesis talks about God’s covenant with us. God promised Noah and all Noah’s descendants that never again would God flood the earth and destroy all flesh. But as those of you who are lawyers know, there are always two parties to a covenant or contract. God made a promise to mankind but we also made promises to God. Our promises are clearly stated when we are baptized in something called, appropriately enough, the Baptismal Covenant. Depending on how old we were at our baptism, either we, or our godparents on our behalf, promised that we would seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves and that we would strive for justice and peace among all people respecting the dignity of every human being. These promises are our side of the Covenant with God. We ignore them at our peril.

Lent is a time for renewed focus on our Baptismal Covenant.

Lent is a time to repent for the ways we have let God down in the past.

Lent is a time for sacrifice to free up time and resources to help those in need.

This Lent, here in our diocese, we have an opportunity to join with other Episcopalians in the struggle against malaria. If every man, woman and child in each congregation in our diocese buys just one long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito net, we will reach our 40,000 net goal. And with those 40,000 nets, the Diocese of Los Angeles can save the lives of up to 100,000 people.

Please join me in walking the path of Nets for Life this Lent.

Mutual Ministry at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Rupert, Idaho

By Dn. Tammy Jones

Mutual Ministry has taken on different names over the past few years. It has been called Total Ministry, Mutual Ministry and Ministry of all the Baptized. Not only are there different names, but ministry of all the baptized also looks different in different congregations. It also seems that both smaller congregations, as well as bigger congregations, struggle with what mutual ministry of all the baptized means. Here is our story of "mutual ministry" at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Rupert, Idaho.

In 1998 we were not known as St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. We were two small congregations approximately 8 miles apart. The Rupert, Idaho Church was called Trinity Memorial Episcopal Church and our sister church in Burley, Idaho was called St. James Episcopal Church. We shared clergy with financial help from the diocese. At this time, we had a husband and wife team of priests as well as a "Canon 9 Priest" (which was the language used at that time) and three deacons. During this same year our husband and wife team took a call to North Dakota and the Diocese of Idaho called a new bishop.

Early on in his Episcopate, Bishop Bainbridge met with those small congregations in the diocese needing new clergy and needing financial assistance from the diocese to do so, and he informed these congregations (Trinity Memorial and St. James included) that the diocese would no longer fund congregations for clergy. If we wanted to call a priest, we would need to be able to financially support the priest on our own. This was not possible at this time, and we felt hurt, betrayed and alone.

For the next two years, we did nothing about our situation but feel hurt and abandoned by the diocese. We were able to continue services and have communion in the two congregations because we did have our Canon 9 Priest and three deacons. We were so much better off than the other small congregations in our diocese, but most of us did not feel that way. We felt that without a seminary trained, paid priest, we were second class citizens. So, we continued to feel hurt and betrayed during this time.

In 2001 Bishop Bainbridge hired The Rev. Margaret Babcock as Canon for Congregational Development in the diocese. She began working with our two congregations to help in the process of discovering who we were as a congregation, what gifts we had to

bring to the table, and to begin to see that all that was needed for ministry was right in our midst. Some of the programs included:

Church Identity; Lifecycles;
Gifts Discernment

This process taught us that we all have gifts to share in ministry. We also began to see that the work we do in the secular world was also ministry. Our two congregations were rich in gifts. In our pews every Sunday sat lawyers, nurses, teachers, accountants, business men, parents with gifted/special needs children, and the list goes on. Everyone had a gift to bring in ministry and a gift to bring in their daily lives. After working with Margaret for a couple of years, we did a call for priest and deacon from our two congregations. The first time, the election did not yield consensus. So, we went back to work with Margaret and did some more congregational development work. The next year



Dn. Jones at the Blessing of the Animals

we again held an election. In this process, if the election yields consensus, the results are forwarded to the bishop. If he approves, he asks the elected if they will serve; if they agree, there is an election. A priest nominee and a deacon nominee were chosen (I was the deacon nominee). The two nominees then started the Commission on Ministry process and education for ordination.

Also during this time, we put together, with Margaret's help, a Mutual Ministry Team. This team was responsible for ministry in the congregation, such as education, hospitality, and community events. After a couple of years, we realized that we were too small for both a Mutual Ministry Team and a Vestry. There were just not enough of us. So we combined the two. The vestry and the clergy work together to keep the ministry

functions and the vestry functions ongoing.

In 2005 we also combined the two churches. We closed St. James in Burley, and changed the name of the church in Rupert to St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. We felt that a new name would give us a new start as a community together.

As a mutual ministry congregation, we have called a priest and another deacon from our midst. At one time we had two local priests and four deacons. We lost our beloved Deacon Colleen Nordin, who passed away in 2007. Our Canon 9 Priest, Nels Moller, retired and moved. We now have one local priest, three deacons and five worship leaders. The ladies guild is very active and takes care of the altar needs and takes care of the clergy. St. Matthew's is involved in diocesan committees, with clergy members from St. Matthew's serving on Diocesan Council, Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry. One of our deacons, Janet King, is the Archdeacon for the Diocese of Idaho.

In May of 2011, we completed a Mutual Ministry Review and have set goals for the next couple of years. Our biggest challenge seems to be connecting with the wider community on a level that makes a difference. This is our goal for the next year.

As deacons in a mutual ministry congregation, it is our role to first model the behavior of mutual ministry and to bring the outside world to the church. All three deacons are very different. In the secular world, Archdeacon Janet King is a nurse practitioner, Deacon Barbara Ward is a teacher and librarian, and I work as a legal assistant. We each bring different gifts to the congregation and to the diocese. Also, as deacons our role is encouraging the gifts and ministries of those in the congregation and to take those gifts out into the community.

It is still hard for many to define what "mutual ministry" really means. It is still difficult for some in our own diocese, but, if you were to ask St. Matthew's what it means, they would tell you it is bringing your gifts to the table and not waiting on a priest from the Bishop. We are still small and we need to do more as a congregation, but we have become stronger, richer and a more involved congregation because of this experience with mutual ministry.

Before Bishop Bainbridge retired, we were able to thank him for everything he gave us. What we thought was the end was really a new beginning.

Taking a Stand Against Poverty (Part III)

by Dn. Sean D. Krausert, St. Michael's Church,
Canmore, AB in the Anglican Diocese of Calgary



“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

Acts 4:32-35

I love this description of the early Church. Being a Deacon with a particular passion for poverty alleviation, I yearn for the day when we can say “there was not a needy person among them.” But more than my fancy for this historical scene, I share these words because of the power and inspiration they have been, and continue to be, with respect to *That Poverty Project*. Since July of last year I have been implementing *That Poverty Project* using social and traditional media to engage thousands of people in awareness and education about poverty issues, and to inspire them to take action to help eliminate poverty at home and abroad.

The scene described in this excerpt from Acts takes place not long after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Despite these amazing preceding events, for the most part life in Judea and surrounding area was much the same after Jesus as it was before. In some respects, nothing had changed. Yet, because of Jesus and the subsequent empowering of the apostles by the Holy Spirit, everything had changed. And, in this context, the scene as described in Acts is one of the first outwardly visible developments as a result of the new Christian movement.

So what was it that happened to the apostles which made it possible for this event to transpire? Of course, we know it was as a result of their time and learning from Jesus combined

with having received the Holy Spirit. But what did the teachings and Spirit actually do to the apostles? Put simply, it prepared their hearts and minds for the ministry ahead of them. The apostles’ consciousness had been altered and a passion had been lit that allowed them to defy the tradition and oppression of the time while spreading the Good News.

To bring about any change in the world, the very first thing that must change is the heart and minds of



individuals and communities involved. It is precisely on the hearts and minds of people that *That Poverty Project* has set its sights and objectives, and that is why this excerpt from Acts is so inspirational. Before change in behaviour, policies and programs can be implemented that improve the lives of those in poverty, the consciousness of people must first be changed with respect to poverty. Only then will their compassion be unleashed and external change be manifested.

In order to garner attention and attract people to poverty issues, *That Poverty Project* involves me participating in three 3-month long high-profile poverty-related experiences focussing on three of the major faces of poverty . . . (i) homelessness, (ii) the struggles of the working poor, and (iii) hunger. It is my intent to be a bridge – walking from one who “has” towards those who “have not” in order to create greater understanding about poverty

while allowing readers to accompany me vicariously on the journey. In other words, *being* a deacon . . . betwixt and between.

At time of writing, I am nearing the mid-point of the third and final phase of the project, which focuses on hunger. Whereas Phase One focused on homelessness by living in a sparsely equipped tent without many of the comforts of home and Phase Two explored the struggles of the working poor by living on an average of \$7.50 per day; Phase Three involves eating only the rations one would receive from the World Food Programme in a refugee camp. Yes, that means three months of being on a “refugee diet” containing approximately 2100 calories per day. The food consists mostly of rice along with some beans, cornmeal, sugar, salt, oil, and multivitamins. And, to maintain what is left of my sanity, I also add spices and hot sauce for flavour. At this point, I have lost 21 lbs in the last 5 ½ weeks, and while the rate of weight loss is slowing I expect to shed another 10 – 15 lbs by the end of the experience. Thus far, I found that I am faring quite well physically, but emotionally and psychologically it has been quite a journey in the face of an endless supply of temptation.

While it is not possible to truly replicate an authentic poverty experience unless you are truly in those circumstances, it has been possible for me to get glimpses of insights into living in poverty. An important facet of the project is to then share these insights with others in order to overcome myths, stereotypes, and other untruths that have come to be associated with those who live in poverty. Two weeks into the refugee diet, I posted the following blog:

THE INSIDIOUS NATURE OF SCARCITY THINKING (March 17, 2012 – Day 17, Phase Three)

In this phase of That Poverty Project, I haven't been able to shake the feeling of not having enough. Not just with respect to food, but everything. During the first two phases, I was definitely in the position of having limited resources and few options. However, during this phase only my food choices and amounts are limited, nothing else. Yet, still, I have to constantly remind myself that I can do things like rent a movie, or buy a t-shirt, or get my wife flowers. I have enough, and yet scarcity thinking has its grip on me.

It really makes me understand my grandparents who had lived through the Great Depression and then for the rest of their lives were in penny-pinching mode. It also makes me wonder if those who find themselves in poverty situations have a tough time breaking free partially because of the way they come to think. Does scarcity thinking become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Of course, scarcity thinking has been around since the beginning of human history. It's scarcity thinking that causes us to hoard, guard, and develop a "me first" mentality. It's scarcity thinking that is the foundation of many conflicts between people and nations. It's scarcity thinking that sets the expectations that a segment of the population being in poverty is natural, and therefore something that we cannot and perhaps should not change. While scarcity thinking may serve one well when lost in the woods with limited rations, in most other cases it is a destructive force.

There are many who rely on scarcity thinking to make massive profits. Advertisers are fully aware of how easy it is to leverage scarcity thinking into making a sale. They tell us what we need in order to be safer, healthier, more beautiful, richer, more respected, and happier. Because, without this product or that product we are sorry excuses for human beings who will shamefully lag behind all others until we die a horrible, lonely death. Scarcity thinking sells.

However, scarcity thinking can never be satisfied. It is a constant gaping bottomless hole into which we throw stuff, only to be wanting more stuff soon after. While many a commercial enterprise not only survives but thrives on this mentality, it is like a cancer that undermines society and literally leaves billions of people without their basic human rights. "Oh," we say, "we'd help them if we could, but there's not enough to go around and we certainly don't have enough to be able to help." Scarcity thinking is quite simply . . . wrong.

The fact is that we live in a world of abundance. There IS enough for everyone to have their basic human rights met. There is enough for those who are rich to still be rich and for no one to be in poverty. It's not a question of whether there is enough to go around, but rather simply a question of priorities. In fact, in many cases in the developed world, it would actually cost society less to eliminate poverty than it does to service it. Yes, that's right, those of us lucky enough to live in a land of prosperity would have a little bit more by eliminating poverty. And, in the developing world, it only takes a small fraction of what the world spends on the military, as an example, to ensure that everyone everywhere had food, water, access to medical care, education, and shelter. Yes,

poverty is actually a matter of priorities, not a question of scarcity.

I encourage you to take a look at what you have and be grateful; be skeptical of what you are told you need to have; and to speak out to make it a priority that everyone have their basic human rights met.

Then shortly thereafter, I shared something deeply personal in the following blog that revealed the true impact the project and, by association, poverty was having on me.

COMING CLEAN (March 23, 2012 – Day 23, Phase Three)

"Is this project going to mess up Sean's head?"

That was a concern raised by my Uncle Dave last July when I started the project. He knew that I've battled with anxiety and depression in the past, and hoped that doing these experiences wouldn't knock me for a loop, psychologically speaking. I assured him at the time that I was feeling great, had lots of good tools at my disposal to combat anxiety and depression, and that I had a fabulous network for moral support. Oh, how naive I was!!

Yes, naive. How could anyone live amongst abundance and deprive themselves in a variety of ways over extended periods of time and not be affected by it? In hindsight, the real question isn't "if" living outside, or struggling to get by, or eating basic rations for 3 months each will mess one up, but "how much" it will mess them up. Of course, there are those who appreciate these lifestyle choices and will thrive in them. However, for the vast majority of us who have come to not only appreciate but rely upon our creature comforts, it would mess us up to some extent.

I've decided to come clean about the true extent of the impact this project has had on me. For the last three months I've been suffering and recovering from a low grade depression. Depression is an illness . . . not a weakness . . . not a figment of one's imagination . . . and a potentially fatal illness at that. Just like many other potentially fatal illnesses, like diabetes or heart disease, it can be treated very effectively. However, just when I should have been extra vigilant because of the stressors I was experiencing, I dropped my guard and the combination of the time of year (seasonal affective disorder) along with not doing the things that I know help me (regular exercise, getting enough sleep, and taking down time rather than being "on" 24/7) knocked me on my butt. That said, I've been able to gut it out and keep working, but it has been incredibly difficult at times.

Why conceal my depression? The short answer is . . . I don't really know. There are many factors that I suspect played into it. First, the illness itself is isolating and self-

deprecating. In other words, the depressed person believes he or she is weak . . . and who wants to broadcast weakness???

Second, somehow I convinced myself that the depression had nothing to do with my experiences but rather that it was a susceptibility I brought to the table in advance. But, really . . . it is something a lot of people bring to the table! Some people suffer mental illness and it results in them living in poverty, and many may find themselves in poverty and then suffer from mental illness because of it. Third, and probably the most likely factor I didn't write about it, I felt I couldn't write about it until I had healed sufficiently. That said, I did drop some clues along the way in previous blogs.

So why come clean now? I had an "a-ha" moment . . . or perhaps it was a "dub" moment. People must be made aware of how devastating depression can be, and the HUGE role it can play in keeping people in the muck once they find themselves in poverty. If I could get depressed, when doing these experiences voluntarily and have the tools and training to stave off depression, then the 99.9% of people who find themselves in poverty involuntarily are sitting ducks. Once a person becomes depressed . . . they have less energy (if any at all), their get up and go has got up and went, they think poorly of themselves, and they tend to isolate themselves from any support networks. In other words, the depressed person in poverty becomes deprived of all of the tools they need in order to get out of poverty and they become entrenched.

The good news is that there are organizations working city streets and in communities that help people regain their mental health as they are helped back on their feet and out of poverty. We just need to support them more so that they can reach even more people. And, even better, we need to put in the societal safeguards that keep people from falling into poverty in the first place.

Oh . . . and in revising my answer to my Uncle Dave's concern . . . **"Yes, absolutely. How could it not? But, if more people get involved in being part of the solution to eliminate poverty, then it is a price I have been willing to pay."**

What do I want people to do in order to be part of the solution regarding poverty eradication? If people want to give more or do more that's great, but it's not what I think is needed most. Our society needs a strategy to address poverty and to make changes at a systemic level. Our priorities must be re-aligned to match our values. Accordingly, what I mostly encourage people to

(See "Krausert" on Page Sixteen)

“Krausert” from Page Fifteen)

do is raise their voices. This may include signing petitions, writing their elected representatives, or being an advocate within their spheres of influence. Through such efforts the change in consciousness spreads, which ultimately leads to the changes necessary to eradicate poverty.

At the end of the day, I believe that working together we can make a world of difference for those in poverty . . . and that’s what *That Poverty Project* is all about. It’s my belief that everyone has a right to have their basic human needs met – food/water, shelter, basic health care, basic education, and freedom from fear. And, I believe that we are called to be God’s hands and feet on Earth ensuring that everyone has those basic needs met. The good news is that we live in a world of abundance (despite whatever the economic forecasts are), and that there is plenty for everyone to have enough. And for that I say, “Thanks be to God.”

More information about That Poverty Project can be found at www.thatpovertyproject.com, where one can connect and follow the project through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Anyone wishing to support the project can do so by (i) listing it up in prayer AND (ii) spreading the word about the project.

Sermon Preached at AED Conference, Baltimore, MD,

By Pam Nesbit, President of AED

The Propers we just read are for the Fifth Sunday in Lent which is tomorrow. And today is the day set aside in our calendar to remember Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, and, in fact, today is the 32nd anniversary of his death. As we were planning this service we decided to go with the Lent 5 Propers rather than those for the Romero feast day. But then, when I was asked to preach and began to prepare this sermon, I read the gospel: “²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” And for reasons which will become clear, I have taken this as a sign to talk to you today about the life and ministry of Oscar Romero.

Several years ago I led a group from the church where I was serving to El Salvador to work on an ongoing joint project of Episcopal Relief and Development and the Anglican Church in El Salvador to build villages. These villages were to be made up of affordable houses that could withstand earthquakes, as well as a church, a clinic and maybe a school. But more than anything they were to build communities where people who had fought bitterly during the civil war could live together in peace. We were not there to build the actual houses. Local men were trained to do that as a way to develop a skill that would allow them to earn a living. So the tasks left for the American visitors, which was us, was to do the unskilled work. The first year, in a place called El Congo, we pulled up old coffee plants, dug foundations for buildings and moved many wheelbarrows of dirt onto a hillside to make it level. The second year we slept in the schoolhouse that had been built over that hillside and helped to level the ground around the newly built houses. The third year, when we drove into El Congo for a visit, the village was full of people, the houses had children running in and out, there was a priest in the church and the clinic was open once a week. And we were spending most of our time moving dirt in another part of El Salvador to help build another village.

On Sundays we did not work. In the morning we worshiped with the community at the Anglican Cathedral. But in the afternoon, we would go to the huge Roman Catholic cathedral of San Salvador, to visit the tomb of Oscar Romero. At that time

Romero’s coffin was kept in a little corner of the crypt. There was a sort of altar made of wood and a hand painted picture of Romero next to the words, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” There were always fresh flowers laid on that wooden tomb. And we could go there and lay our hands on it and feel the presence of the man who had said, “If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people.”

As you probably know, Oscar Romero was a Roman Catholic priest who was appointed a bishop and then Archbishop of



El Salvador because he was expected not to make waves. He was a quiet, intellectual, kind of nerdy guy who did not enjoy conflict. He had grown up without wealth and had worked among the poor, but during his rise in the church he had come to know and become friends with privileged people as well as the poor. In his attempt not to demonize anyone, he applied a kind of moral equivalence to the behavior of the poor and the rich – all of whom were obviously making mistakes. As one friend put it, ‘His thinking was that the sheep and the wolves should eat from the same dish’.

Romero seemed to assume that if the people in power just understood how destructive their policies were they would change them. So he appealed to their

(Continued on next page)



Archdeacons and Directors

March 24, 2012

reason. He wrote a letter to then-president Jimmy Carter as a fellow Christian, urging him to please stop sending arms and money to the men who were terrorizing, torturing and killing people in El Salvador. But Carter was in no position politically to change this policy. So he did not respond to the letter. Romero documented the activities of some of the high level Roman Catholic clergy, who supported the state terrorism as God's work because the peasant leaders were seen as communists. Romero took this painstaking, seven volume document himself to the Vatican to urge the Pope to use his influence to stop the support of the murder of peasants. But Pope John Paul, who had fought against communism in his native Poland, had a terrible blind spot about the nature of violence in the name of anti-Communism, no matter how horrific. So the Pope, like the president, both good men who were paralyzed by their position and privilege, ignored Romero's plea and did nothing.

In 1974, the Salvadoran National Guard, trained and equipped by the United States, slaughtered innocent peasants in the west of El Salvador. Romero's good friend, the Jesuit priest Rutilio Grande, who was living and working with the peasants, was shot and killed soon thereafter. At that point Romero began to see what it would really mean to be a shepherd to his people who were being slaughtered by wolves, even wolves who believed they were doing God's will. He realized he had to speak out. He cancelled all church services and required all Catholics to listen on the radio to his Sunday mass and sermon. And he excommunicated the killers of Rutilio Grande and his companions as unrepentant murderers.

Romero began to see the suffering of Christ in the suffering of the Salvadoran people. And he began to see his task as a follower of Christ, to be with those people in their agony. In 1977 in the wake of atrocities committed by government forces in Aguilares he said to the people, "you are the image of the divine victim... You are Christ today, suffering in history." Romero never doubted that the only weapons appropriate to the body of Christ were non-violent ones. He continually urged the revolutionaries as well as the government forces to put down their guns.

Romero refused to live in the palace set aside for the Archbishop, living instead in a small house in a middle class suburb. He prayed daily in the small nearby church where he was later killed and he ate and prayed with the local Sisters of Mercy who ran a nearby hospital and who took care of him.

In his final broadcast sermon, Romero told the government soldiers that God did not want them to kill their brothers and sis-

Only when truth about human pain is allowed an honest voice can there be healing for Church or world

ters and that they must refuse to obey orders telling them to do so. He named the government's violence as a sin, robbing it of the imprimatur of anti-communism in Christ's name, which has always been the justification for state terror in Central America. The next day, as he was at the altar, in the midst of the Eucharistic prayer, a car drove up in front of the church and a gunman aimed down the aisle of the church and shot Oscar Romero in the heart. He died minutes later.

Thousands showed up at Romero's funeral, despite being told not to attend. The huge cathedral was filled and so was the square. Government sharpshooters fired from the roofs of buildings down onto the people in the square and, when they tried to run, they were trapped by tanks which blocked the surrounding streets. The last time I was in El Salvador I spoke with Sister Patricia, one of the sisters who still works at the hospital and who had been a friend of Romero. She told me that, after his assassination, she was told that if she and her sisters knew what was good for them, they would never speak about Oscar Romero. That if they were wise, they would act as if he never existed.

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also." Oscar Romero served Jesus by following him even into death. But as a child of the resurrection, he knew that this was not the end. He had said that if he was killed he would rise again in the Salvadoran people, and his presence in El Salvador is

palpable. But even more, his life continues to inspire us to risk being in community with the oppressed, naming the violence that is inherent in greed and oppression, and telling the truth while offering violence to no one.

Two years ago, Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking on the anniversary of Romero's death said this:

"The Church has to be truly the dwelling place of the Spirit by becoming a place where suffering and injustice are named for what they are. It may not make for a superficially placid Church; but only when truth about human pain is allowed an honest voice can there be healing for Church or world. The deepest unity of the Body is created by Christ's own embrace without reservation of the appalling suffering, the helplessness and voicelessness, the guilt, the frustration, the self-doubt of human beings, so as to infuse into it his own divine compassion." With Christ, said Romero in a Christmas sermon, 'God has injected himself into history'.

Archbishop Williams went on to say:

"If that is the foundation for the unity of the Body, a true martyr-saint is someone who does not belong to a faction or party in the Church, who is not just a simple hero for left or right, but one who expresses clearly and decisively the embrace of Christ offered to all who suffer, who struggle, who fear to be lost and fear even more to be found. It is an embrace offered to all, including those who are trapped in their own violence and inhumanity: it is good news for the rich as well as the poor. But the embrace of Christ for the prosperous, let alone the violent, is not a matter of getting sheep and wolves to mingle freely; it is an embrace that fiercely lays hold on the sinner and will not let go until love has persuaded them to let go of their power and privilege."

Surely this is a call to us as deacons. Not to be caught in any faction, but to speak the truth, especially the uncomfortable truth, while refusing to hate anyone. As we move into this final week of Lent, may we be inspired by the call of Oscar Romero, speaking from his time, to be true followers of Jesus and servants in his name, in our time.

Deacon Doings in The Diocese Of St. Ives

by The Ven. W. Keith McCoy, Archdeacon, Diocese of New Jersey

Welcome back to the sixteenth chapter of a regular interactive feature which continues in Diakoneo.

What this series is about is the life of deacons, and the situations we find ourselves in. Over the years, I have had my share of “problem moments,” or had friends tell me about their problems. Some of these situations could have been handled better with some knowledge or experience, and many others were cases where any number of solutions would have worked, except the one I chose. The voice of experience was needed, but it wasn't always at hand. This will be an opportunity to share our experiences, and perhaps help others when the question comes up in their lives.

Thus, these stories. They are set in the fictional Diocese of St. Ives, somewhere on the East Coast (no, it is not modeled on New Jersey). No one is real, but the situations are true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, and the guilty as well. In each issue of Diakoneo -- for the foreseeable future -- there will be a new story.

Each “case study” will be an opportunity for comment. Before I make my observations (based on twenty plus years as a deacon and as a manager of public agencies) in the subsequent issue, I would appreciate your input.

I invite you to drop me a line or more at kmccoy1@optonline.net, or write to me at 14 Second Street, Edison NJ 08837, to give me your take on how to rectify the matter described. If you get back to me within a month of receiving the latest issue of Diakoneo, I'll take your comments into consideration when writing the analysis of that story, and quite possibly even quote from your solution.

The goal is to help us all deal with the craziness that crops up in our lives and ministries. By sharing our experiences, I believe we can make those crazy moments more understandable and manageable. I hope you enjoy the stories, as well.

Dn. Keith McCoy

Response to Chapter 15

Human nature tends to want life to be predictable. Most upsets for people occur when what is expected doesn't happen. You drive to work every day along the same route, but find the road this morning is blocked for repairs – what is your reaction? *C'est la vie?* I doubt it. We all like the familiar; it comforts us, and we don't have to think too much about it. We save our thinking for more important matters than, say, mere commuting.

Some people like the familiar too much, however. They shun anything out of the ordinary, they can't handle all the changes in the world around them. They don't want anything or anyone to intrude upon the life they have ordered for themselves. Routine brings comfort to them, and disruption of that routine is upsetting. It is how they cope with what they don't or won't understand.

For an old-timer like Adelaide Rockefeller, the appearance of this deacon in her living room rattles her universe. She set her opinions and arranged her world view many years ago, when the clergy were all priests, all white (at least in her circles) and all male, and, if one of those priests happened to like men, he kept it to himself and out of the parish eye. Dn. Wong-Allan, and what he represents, forces her to consider change to her ordered universe, and she doesn't like that.

That explains her reaction, but doesn't excuse her rudeness. The question for us is, how should the deacon respond to her words, and which words should he respond to? How should any deacon respond when they are dismissed as secondary or unworthy of serving as a minister of the church?

Charity and understanding should be the first response. Turning the other cheek is a recommended tactic by Jesus, the model servant. It should help Kevin to brush off the insulting remarks, and to persevere in reaching out to Adelaide. It may also help him to realize that her reaction is not to him personally, so much as it is to what he represents. She does not know the deacon at all; what she is reacting to is the unfamiliar, to the superficial, and to the change in her routine. Painful though it may be for him, it may take more than one visit before she sees him for himself and not as a symbol.

Creating familiarity would be the second step. Knowing each other will dispel stereotypes and misunderstanding. Deacon Wong-

Allan can come to see Mrs. Rockefeller as a person hemmed in by her past and her current limitations. I don't doubt that Mrs. Rockefeller can be led to understand that both deacon and priest can represent All Souls to her, and both can provide the connection she seeks with her past there.

The ethnic part can be addressed, too, as Fr. Carillon and Dn. Wong-Allan minister to the elderly woman as a team, rather than as individuals. In time, the deacon will not be seen as the Chinese guy who is masquerading as an Episcopalian, but as a minister of the church she loves, who happens to be of a different race.

The gay issue may take a little more time: for many, opposition to gay people is based on stereotypes and unfamiliarity (as are all prejudices), and familiarity will ultimately show that GLBT people are just like everyone else. There are, however, some others who latch on to stray verses in Scripture, or to dubious scholarship, to buttress their viewpoint, in which case it will be more difficult to budge them from the opinion they have chosen to defend to the end. It is harder to be friends with someone who has decided to be an enemy, rather than someone who opposes, as an automatic reaction to whatever is new.

There is no guarantee that, once past the issues of race, youth, holy order, and even sexuality, that the lady and the deacon will get along. There are other issues which can divide: politics, worship style, comportment, you name it. Who knows what buttons we push in another's psyche. Generally, it is time which overcomes the initial suspicions, and repeat applications of love and acceptance which will break down the barriers that people so quickly throw up in response to the unfamiliar. When we are dissed as a deacon, the best response is to love the diss back.

And now for Chapter Sixteen, on the next page.

Chapter XVI – Is Paris Worth a Mass?

Ever since they got married, Deacon Holly Pollock and her husband Dan vacationed during the summer at Ocean City. What started as a honeymoon lark turned into a family tradition. The kids grew up looking forward to it, and eldest daughter Allison even had her wedding there a few years ago.

It was the winter after the wedding that things started to change. Holly called down a little later than usual to confirm the reservation of the bungalow, and found that the owner had sold it, and the new owner was living there year round. Several frantic phone calls to Ocean City ads and agents got the Pollocks no new place to roost. Finally, one rental agent suggested they try the village of Paris, about 45 minutes south along the coast. Trying to be helpful, the agent said it was small, quaint, had an artist colony, and no amusement parks – “a good place for people your age.”

Despite that unwelcome characterization, Holly and Dan contacted the visitor bureau there, and finally found a summer rental in Paris. They went for their accustomed week some months later, expecting to be disappointed. Instead, they were charmed. Paris was indeed quaint, and artsy, and thoroughly delightful. There was even an Episcopal chapel, ministered to by an elfin old priest who exuded the same charm everyone else in town seemed to possess. Holly and Dan fell in love with Paris.

So much so, that they returned there the following summer, and then again in the fall. They enjoyed the quiet beach, the two cafes, chatting up the artists, and going incognito at St. Margaret’s Chapel. By the third summer, the Pollocks were thinking of buying a retirement house in Paris.

No sooner had that fantasy taken root, however, than life began to change. Proposed modifications to the state retirement

system pushed Dan to file his retirement papers much sooner than he had planned. A shake-up at Holly’s company left her with the option of moving to California or taking a demotion; she chose to retire as well. All the kids were grown and out of the house. The two Pollocks thought: what’s keeping us here?

So, Holly and Dan made a leap of faith. In a matter of a few months, they sold the home they had raised their family in, bought a house in Paris, and began the transition from M-F 9-5 + church to retirement.

After the move, it took a while to paint and unpack, but after about three weeks of work following their arrival (and several long trips to the nearest Lowe’s – Paris was definitely off the beaten track), Dan and Holly felt settled enough in the new digs to begin living out their new existence. As it was now the middle of Lent, Holly and Dan agreed that they should head down to St. Margaret’s on Sunday, introduce themselves as not just tourists, but new residents, and see if Holly could help out in any diaconal way.

Their arrival on the next Sabbath was different than the other visits, however. The front door was locked when they arrived ten minutes before, so they followed someone who was scurrying through a side door. Inside, all seemed hustle and bustle, verging on confusion. The little old cleric was nowhere to be seen, and many minutes after 11 am, an older woman came out into the choir stalls and started Morning Prayer, or a variation thereof. It was a sloppy and unfulfilling worship experience.

Afterwards, Holly and Dan approached a knot of parishioners, and introduced themselves. All of the parish stalwarts recognized them from previous visits, and welcomed them back. Anna, who tripped through the service that morning, and identified herself as the senior warden, explained that Father Humphrey had taken a fall back before Thanksgiving, and his children had moved

him into an assisted living residence far from Paris. There were no other Episcopal clergy living nearby, so there had not been a cleric at St. Margaret’s for almost four months, not even for Christmas. The Diocese of St. Ives thought they might be able to provide some help during the summer, but had no other ideas to offer the tiny congregation.

That’s when Holly opened her mouth. “Perhaps I can help. I’m a deacon, from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Now that we’re living here, maybe I could lend a hand.”

The reaction was instantaneous, and universal. “A deacon!!! You could take over from Father Humphrey!” And immediately the leadership of St. Margaret’s saw their prayers answered, and started to enumerate what the former vicar had done in his retirement years in Paris, and how the deacon could just step right in, and do the same things.

Holly quickly demurred. “I just can’t jump in and do what Father did. He was a priest, and I’m a deacon. I can’t run vestry meetings, I don’t celebrate the Eucharist. I really work at the direction of a priest, not on my own.” The leadership, which seconds ago looked like they had won the lottery, now looked like someone had snatched their ticket away.

George, the treasurer, was the first to outline their confusion. “We need pastoral care, and you’re a pastor. Do we need to tell the diocese what you’re doing? Can’t we say you are helping us, and not say what you’re helping with?” At which, he gave Holly a big, conspiratorial wink.

“I’m afraid not,” replied Holly. “I could get in trouble with the Bishop. I can do a few things, but I can’t act like I’m your priest.”

There was a pregnant pause, into which the voice of one of the onlookers floated, in an Irish whisper: “So, what good is a deacon, then?”

Writing for dollars: innovative ways to expand your congregation’s outreach

Robert S. Runkle, Candidate for Ordination as a Deacon, and Tracey Waring, MSW, Executive Director, G.O.A.L. Project, Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

We learn through our Baptismal Covenant what Christ wants us to do in this world, namely to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself,” and to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.” Or as we hear in Micah 6:8, “Now, O people,

the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” All of us, lay and ordained, are called to this work, but it aptly describes the special ministry of servanthood to which deacons are called. Deacon Ormande Plater, in a

recent issue of *Diakoneo*, described what he seeks in a deacon:

“Deacons who are sensitive to the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. Who recognize and record them. Who look about them at the peoples and sights of their neighborhood.

(See “Writing” on Page Twenty)

“Writing” from Page Nineteen

Who listen carefully to the words and sounds about them, where they live and where they worship. Who have the gift of interpretation (this is not just about foreign languages). Who can recognize, analyze, and explain.”

While we may sincerely wish to live out our covenant, reality becomes an issue, as it is difficult to do justice in today’s world without some money for events or services. However, not having “deep pockets” among congregants is not a deterrent to serving the Christ in our communities. Even if a congregation has the drive and passion to reach out to their neighbors in need, such programs may be difficult to sustain without funding from multiple sources.

In our own congregations in the Diocese of Spokane, we have realized that financial resources are available in the form of large and small grants from a wide variety of sources. What it takes to find and secure grant funding is a willingness to do some homework, including developing a clearly defined mission statement, and an ability to articulate the purpose of the specific ministry. In the coming paragraphs, we will share with you what we have learned and suggest some ideas to consider. We have broken the process down into several discrete topics.

Create a plan of action

If you are engaged in your community, it does not take long to identify one or more issues needing to be addressed. One important step people with good intentions may overlook is developing a plan of action. When you think you have an outreach concept that several people can support, one of the first steps is to define the mission and your vision of the ministry. This is critical for inviting others to join in the excitement and help get the program started. There are key questions to ask yourself and those with whom you are working:

What specific need are we trying to meet? (Remember, no matter how hard you try, you cannot be all things to all people.)

How can we meet that need?

Who is our target population?

How many people do we expect to serve?

What resources – people, talents, and money – do we have in our congregation?

How many volunteers will we need to serve our clients efficiently and effectively?

What type of facility do we need? How much space?

Are others in the community working on the same or similar issues?

Who might be our collaborators?

What other resources will we need?

Once these questions are answered you can create an initial written plan and set dates to meet key benchmarks. You’ll want to look ahead and have some idea of the potential tasks and costs over a five year period. This information will come in handy when you begin to seek outside resources, and will be extremely helpful if you decide to seek grant support and/or need to create informational materials. Defining your overall concept in writing can be critical to the future success of your ministry.

Analyze congregational strengths

In defining the ministry you want to start, you must realistically decide if you really have enough congregational support to do this ministry. Are there enough people to work on the critical aspects of your ministry? Does the kind of ministry you have described fit your congregation? For example, if you are serving a youth oriented group, do you have enough members of the right age? After all, members may need to work with youngsters, attend parks or camps, and dream up games to meet their activity needs. These may not be attractive to a congregation with a large percentage of retired members. If there are not enough able-bodied people in your congregation, is there another church or organization with younger members willing to partner with you? To answer these questions, it is important to understand the tasks to be done and the skill sets needed, and to honestly estimate the number and age range of volunteers required to succeed with the project.

Initial funding may simply come from your congregation’s current budget, or by a request to the vestry for support for your project. Getting started may simply take asking selected interested members to donate a small amount of start-up funds. Sometimes for a specific project, a congregation-wide request will add enough funds to get started. One congregation had the children paint water-color pictures, had a local artist frame them, and auctioned these off during coffee hour, using a member who had a booming voice from his radio years! This raised about \$750 to fund the first year’s outreach activities with a family transitional housing ministry. Submitting a request for line item expense in the congregation’s annual budget for your outreach is extremely important, just to make the outreach effort visible to members of the congregation.

After a year or so of operating this new outreach program, the needs of the organization with which you work may become more obvious and may also exceed the capacity of your congregation. At this point, an under-

standing of your local and regional community will become important.

As you mentally inventory the collective resources of your outreach group, see if there is any retired grant or contract writer in your congregation to help flesh out your concept. Try to involve them at the start in your planning efforts. Be on the lookout, too, for any former English teachers or editors in your congregation – these skills will be so important when you begin to prepare grant applications. However, do not be deterred if you cannot find anyone with these skills. Although grant writing may seem complicated at first, many novice grant writers have successfully written grants to fund their programs.

Determine your funding needs and develop a budget

You will have to define the actual needs of your project, and develop costs for its various components. If you are new to budgeting, there are several free nonprofit budget spreadsheets available on the web. While they may not include everything, these spreadsheets do include the essential budget requirements and can help you better define your program costs. It is very helpful to prioritize sub-elements at the start, so that as you begin exploring grant opportunities, you will understand how to phase the project budget effectively.

As you move forward with developing a budget, it may become apparent that your ministry can be launched in phases. While it may be tempting to leave the figures for future expansion out of the budget, a word to the wise is to include these line items with a nominal dollar amount assigned. This will allow you to start looking for the funding needed to proceed in steps.

You will want to verify your projected costs with several people to make sure that you don’t overlook a key element or severely underestimate certain costs. This budget information will be critical as you begin to identify potential funding sources. You want to be prepared to have facts with which to talk to the representatives of the grant makers and/or funders that you identify through the next section of this process.

Identify local and regional sources of funding

Private and public grantors do fund church-sponsored projects that serve the community, as long as you are not trying to proselytize the participants or fund religious programs. Once your project is defined and you have some ideas of the costs involved, start networking with others in

your community to identify possible sources of funding. Check to see if there are regional organizations for grant writers. Consider attending their meetings, as many of these individuals will openly discuss with non-profit organizations potential grant-making sources with which they regularly work. In many communities, the local United Way (UW) office and library may have extensive resources, databases, and searchable resources to find grant agencies, foundations, and corporations. Talk to the UW director and to the research librarian at your community library about what your church wishes to do. Many times they will personally know the staff of regional foundations or groups and willingly make an introduction. Sometimes it is as simple as letting the need for grant funds be known within your congregation, as some members may work for companies that donate to community efforts and organizations.

Primary sources of funding include local foundations and gifting clubs (members pool their money together and give to several projects in their community), as well as community foundations (in our area, these include the Inland Northwest Community Foundation, Idaho Community Foundation, and Empire Health Foundation).

Obtain the names and contact information of any regional utilities and manufacturing firms in your area. Some will have a foundation or grant program, and frequently provide in-kind support and volunteers as well financial contributions. (In our area, a local electrical cooperative encourages customers to “round up” their payments, thus allowing its foundation to distribute \$70,000 in modest grants each year.) Talk to or investigate all regional or local real estate firms and banks, as these businesses frequently support regional projects that are designed to improve community resources.

Many of the non-profit service organizations (such as Rotary, Elks, and Lions) have special or regular grant programs through which they assist local non-profit groups. Become familiar with these groups in your community, understand their grant cycles and requirements, and contact each group to seek an opportunity to explain your specific program to the members. You may even have one or more members of these organizations in your congregation – talk to them before approaching these groups.

Another potential source of grant support is the transportation industry, including railroads, airlines, bus systems – most of these companies have foundations which support charitable efforts or non-profits in the geographic areas they serve. Some brokerage

firms have small as well as large programs to provide financial support. Again, these additional sources of funding can be found by speaking with your fellow congregants and asking for information. The key to identifying funding sources is to network, network, and network some more.

Once you identify possible funding sources, you need to carefully review their respective websites and get a clear understanding of whether your project fits within the scope of projects they fund. If there is no website, contact the organization and ask for information about their funding opportunities and how to apply.

After completing the background research, the next step is to contact each funding source that appears to fund projects such as yours. If they are willing, speak with their representative (either in person or by phone), explain your idea and ask for suggestions on how to structure your grant application. They may also know an established nonprofit in your area with which you can collaborate or seek advice on starting your program. Such introductions may accelerate the realization of your outreach efforts and allow your congregation to get started, or to grow your project, much sooner. Review two to three years of recent awards by such organizations in order to understand the range and scope of their grants and the types of agencies and projects funded. This will avoid wasting effort seeking support from organizations for projects that are outside their scope.

Outline draft grant applications

An increasing number of funding agencies only accept on-line applications. These can be tricky, and you need to review the application requirements in advance. On-line applications allow you to save and review your work as you go (save it often) and will flag any missing information or documentation. You need to make sure that you understand what aspects of the grant source requirements are critical and compatible with your operation. You should download their forms and complete all answers off-line. Once your response have been developed in draft form, review them carefully, proof your text, and get someone such as an English major or retired grant writer to review your work. You must make sure that you answer all questions completely. Allow enough time to create a “pdf” version of certain documents, such as financial reports, lists of vestry members from previous years, copies of The Episcopal Church IRS status letter, etc. Your own church or diocesan offices will have any legal or IRS documentation you may need. You

may also need a copy of the project budget, brief biographies of staff or other leads to be involved, etc. After final proofing, copy and paste the corrected text into the correct areas of the on-line form and attach the specific documents requested.

Written Applications

For written applications in particular, provide the details that are essential for each section of the proposal. You may allocate various sections to other writers, but it’s best to have one leader primarily responsible for finalizing the text. Here is where you can use those volunteer editors to proof your text, suggest areas where you have failed to answer fully the questions and fine-tune your response. You can never have too much help with editing, as multiple reviewers will catch your errors before you submit the material.

St. Luke’s Church, Coeur d’Alene, ID - typical funding we have secured

St. Luke’s began their outreach endeavors by an identifying step in which we decided to team with the Coeur d’Alene St. Vincent de Paul Society, specifically with their Transitional Housing Center. This facility provides up to two years for families to break the poverty cycle; provides life skills and parenting skill training to the adults and job search assistance. The specific role of St. Luke’s volunteers has been to work with the children each Monday evening for an hour while their parents are attending life skills and parenting training sessions. We provide regular healthy snacks, books, and games for the children, either outside or inside, depending on weather conditions. We schedule outings during the spring and summer, occasionally have the children and families and staff come to the Parish Hall for meals, and plan several events during the year. The St. Luke’s Men plan a summer fishing day, complete with fishing poles, BBQ and lessons on setting the hooks, etc. Volunteers help each Christmas take the children “shopping” with vouchers to the Thrift Store for parental and sibling gifts, followed by treats while they wrap the gifts. There is a huge Christmas dinner for children, families, staff and residents of single adult facilities, complete with Santa Claus and small gifts for each child. During the summer months, volunteers have taken the children to a retired center for lions, tigers and bears, prepared a picnic lunch and spent most of the day wandering through the display area. All of these events take money for food, travel, etc. We respond to staff requests for specific help, such as flash drives for each family to save personal and work-

(See “Writing” on Page Twenty Two)

("Writing" from Page Twenty One)

related documents, annual day-planners to learn the discipline of keeping schedules of job interviews or appointments, or small gift cards to be dispersed by staff as rewards when residents complete assignments, such as obtaining a GED, completing a college course, etc.

St. Luke's has been fortunate to be granted approximately \$10K over the past five year period. The largest grant was \$2,000; the smallest \$500. During that period, the average amount was about \$500 per year of budgeted funds; about \$2,000 per year of the grant funds we were awarded. These funds came from a variety of sources: Koote-nai Electric Trust (local co-op utility); Avista Foundation (regional utility); Windermere Foundation (regional real estate firm); The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane Poverty Fund and The Episcopal Church Jubilee Ministry grants. Without this support, there would not have been the needed funding to provide a safe haven for the children whose numbers

have exceeded approximately 155 children over the five year period.

Great Opportunities of a Lifetime (G.O.A.L.) Project, St. Andrew's Church, Spokane, WA

The G.O.A.L. Project started as an outreach program of St. Andrews. G.O.A.L. provides clothing, shoes, coats, hygiene, and accessories to the men and women residing in the county, state, and federal work release programs located in Spokane County. Their mission is providing a hand-up in the process of rebuilding their lives in the community. They recruited 14 volunteers who work with 40 – 50 clients each month to help them find appropriate interview and/or work clothing. Subsequently, it has been necessary for the G.O.A.L. Project to relocate to a nearby community facility in order to increase space as their services have grown. Funding for the G.O.A.L. Project support has come from a variety of sources, including donations from members of St. Andrew's Church, community members,

Diocese of Spokane Poverty Fund, Jubilee Ministry, as well as personal donations from community members and other grants. Many congregations from the Diocese of Spokane in Washington and north Idaho have regularly supported the Clothing Closet with donations, which was the initial focus of the G.O.A.L. project

Is your ministry growing to the point you need to become a 501(c)(3)?

Once your organization has initial and continuing funding established there may come a time when it is necessary to look outside of your current sources of funding for additional revenues as you continue to be blessed with a thriving and growing ministry. This is the time to consider the possibility of becoming a stand-alone non-profit organization. Nonprofit organization (abbreviated as NPO) is neither a legal nor technical definition but generally refers to an organization that uses surplus revenues to achieve its goals, rather than distributing them as profit or dividends. Each state defers to the IRS

through the dust by Ormonde Plater

Unless I go ga-ga or have a stroke before reaching the end of this essay, I plan to write about old deacons. That should not be a surprise. We old deacons are many, for many of us were ordained long after building a career or chasing children around the house, when we were already starting to get long in the tooth. And many of us suffer from the ravages of time. Indeed (if I may add a personal note), in the last two years I have experienced a series of what are known euphemistically as "surgical procedures" (doctors cutting you open to correct your physical being). But enough of the good old days. There are three points about age I want to make:

First, let me never hear a deacon talk about being retired. There is no such thing as a retired deacon—or retired priest or bishop, for that matter. Ordination changes us permanently, in our being (our ontology) and in our relationships with others, and no passage of years can weaken or reverse or nullify those changes. Function is a different matter, and time can lessen our ability to function in our accustomed role as deacon, although we remain a deacon.

Recently on anglodeacons (the deacon listserv) we celebrated the death day of Mary Drew, who was ordained in the diocese of Olympia at age 77 and died at 91. True, she "retired" a year or so before her death, a reflection more of institutional custom than of ecclesiastical reality, but the point remains: she was a deacon until death.

I would even argue that we are deacons after death. If icons, those windows or doors into the kingdom of God, are any indication of eternal reality, iconographic deacons (like other ordained persons) wear their vestments and carry symbols such as gospel books, church buildings, and censers. Voila! They are still deacons, in the realm beyond, conversing with us and inviting us to join them. So don't speak of retired deacons. They don't exist!

This reality is reflected in canon law of the Episcopal Church, which specifies that on reaching age 72 we "shall resign from all positions of active service in this church" (Canon III.7.7). Moreover, the bishop may "assign a resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed twelve months, and this term may be renewed." That's all about functions, not ontology or relationships, and the word "retired" is never used.

Second, what's this funny business about age 72? One does not automatically become incompetent, physically or mentally, on reaching a certain age specified by law. It could just as easily be 90 (the age when Mary Drew decided to toss in the towel) or even 100. Or earlier than 72. The date when one needs to give up "active service" varies from person to person and depends on each person's mental and physical condition.

So then, what does "active service" mean? For one deacon, it might be the full range of activity undertaken when one was younger

and healthier. For another, it might be such service reduced to a lower level of activity. For another, the ability to serve in the liturgy, in a congregation that remembers and recognizes past service in the world, might be sufficient evidence of activity.

Age of resignation or, more correctly, reduction of active service, is best handled through dialogue and negotiation involving the deacon, the bishop, and congregational leaders. It is worst handled through the rigid application of the present canons.

Third, the wear and tear of old age is real. If we were cars, we would just drive into the shop and order up replacements. Or turn ourselves in for a new model. But we aren't, and we can't. Baptism is permanent, holy orders are permanent, the physical body isn't. (My stepmother once complained that she didn't want to be resurrected with the body of a 60-year-old, which she was at the time. I replied that her new body would be an improvement. She was not amused.)

In the words of an old blues, sung by Bessie Smith: You been a good ole wagon, honey, but you done broke down.

That's the way many of us are, broke down, rebuked, and resigned, but not retired.



designation conferred under United States Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c), when the IRS deems an organization eligible. They may or may not have shareholders.

While not-for-profit organizations are permitted to generate surplus revenues, they must be retained by the organization for its self-preservation, expansion, or plans. Many have paid staff including management, while others use unpaid volunteers and even executives who work without compensation (or that work for a token fee, such as \$10 per year). Where there is a token fee, in general, it is used to meet legal requirements for establishing a contract between the executive and the organization. In the United States, such inference is the purpose of the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c). The extent to which an NPO can generate surplus revenues may be constrained or use of surplus revenues may be restricted. In some instances, becoming an IRS registered organization may increase the size of potential grants from foundations. When considering becoming an IRS-designated NPO, it necessary to weigh the costs versus benefits as there is a significant cost to apply and the IRS places constraints on organizations that exist as an outreach arm of a congregation.

Diocese of Spokane Organizations with current or potential separate non-profit status

G.O.A.L. Project. This was originally an outreach effort of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and utilized available church space. In order to increase their funding potential, the Board has submitted paperwork to become a 501(c)(3) organization. Recently, they moved to a location that is more community-based in an effort to expand their services beyond their initial scope.

Holy Trinity Dinner Table – This ministry, currently an outreach project of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church is in in West Central Spokane. Their mid-week meal attracts more than twice as many attendees as the weekly church services. Multiple congregations in the Spokane community provide volunteers to work regularly preparing and/or serving the weekly meal at Holy Trinity. They, too, have submitted their IRS nonprofit application in an effort to increase potential sources of support outside the Episcopal Church.



("Nesbit" from Page Twenty Four)

Talk about it. Start your next meeting with this question and then say why you are doing so. Discuss the resolution with your bishops and your delegates and let them know that by doing this you are living out your diaconal call and encouraging the church to truly engage the diakonia of all believers. And if General Convention rejects our resolution, bring it into your next diocesan convention and implement it in your parish.

Let's get out there and plant some seeds!

**Pam Nesbit
President**

Membership in AED

- Dues are:
- Annual Sustaining: \$75
 - Annual Regular: \$50
 - Annual Student/Limited Income \$30
 - Annual Supporting: \$150
 - Life Membership \$1,000
(24-month Extended Payment Life Membership available; please inquire.)

Name _____

Address _____

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- Check for US \$ _____ (US bank or US money order)
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Card Number _____

Name on Card _____

Exp. Date _____

- I am:
- deacon
 - in formation for deacon
 - want to be a deacon
 - bishop
 - presbyter
 - other friend

Birth date: (if deacon or in formation) ____/____/____

Ordination date: (if deacon) ____/____/____

My diocese: _____

Mail this form to: AED, PO Box 1324, Paso Robles, CA 93447-1324

Calendar of Diaconate Events

14-16 March 2013 Archdeacons and Formation Directors Conference, Maritime Institute, Baltimore, MD

13-16 June 2013 AED Diaconal Assembly, Woodlands Hotel and Suites, Colonial Williamsburg, VA

“... the only gospel”

By pam nesbit

“you may be the only gospel your neighbor ever reads.” st. francis of assisi

Over the past three years or so, the AED board has been intentionally working to move our organization to a new understanding of our mission. I have talked about this before in this column; about our commitment to make this an organization that engages and promotes diaconal ministry (the diakonia of all believers) in addition to supporting deacons themselves and diaconal programs. Our name change was part of that process. The very successful fundraising campaign of last year was intended to support this transformation. And now, with the upcoming General Convention, it seems to me that we are taking the next step in becoming a voice that truly speaks to the church about the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.

As Board Member John Cummings has explained in his article in this issue, AED is calling the church to put people living in poverty on the agenda of every church meeting during 2013. Following up on a decision made by the AED board in March, a resolution was offered by Board Member Bp. Michael Garrison along with the bishops of Indianapolis and Northern California, calling for the church to require that every meeting on the parish, diocesan and Church-wide level begin with the agenda item: “How will what we are doing here affect or involve people living in poverty?”

This is a really simple resolution, simple and small like a seed. But, if we can plant this seed in every meeting that is held in

our church for a year, who knows what can grow? When this idea was first presented to me, I was offered the following example: say that a parish is having a meeting to plan Vacation Bible School and is beginning this meeting with this agenda item. Where might the ensuing conversation lead? What if they are planning to buy t-shirts for the program. Who is making the t-shirts? Where are they being made? Should we find the cheapest t-shirts as a matter of stewardship, or perhaps buy t-shirts made in the U.S, or perhaps made by an organization that is providing work for people living in poverty even if they cost more? And who is invited to our VBS? Are there children living in poverty who might enjoy participating in our program? What would be involved in making that available and pleasant for those children in the way of invitations, transportation and contact with their parents? What food are we planning to offer? Who is making the food? Does the program we are offering assume that every child participating has two parents at home? Does it make the children of single parents uncomfortable? Does it assume that every child participating has a home? And enough to eat and wear? These are some of the questions that can occur about something as relatively straightforward as Vacation Bible School if we take the time for them to be asked. I don't know what the answer to these questions would be. But I do know that asking them will change the meeting and it just might

affect some of the decisions that are made as the Vacation Bible School goes forward.

The responses to this resolution have been interesting. One person said “Who is not for Motherhood and Apple Pie,” implying that the resolution is trivial. I don't think it is. And then come the competitive responses: “What about discipleship? what about the environment? what about the Five Marks of Mission?” Many people seem to be offended by the fact that we are making the situation of people living in poverty so central in the life of the church. But isn't that exactly what Christ calls us to do? Personally I think that the main problem with this resolution is that it makes people uncomfortable. In a sense, it's not just a seed, it's a pebble... in the shoe of the church. It will change the dynamics of our meetings and make it harder to put our relationship with people living in poverty into the ghetto of “outreach”. It will focus us on thinking about how what we do every day affects people living in poverty rather than on how much we are giving to the poor. It will bring our relationship with people living in poverty into the center of our life together as a church. I think that's a good thing.

So, what do you think? If this resolution, this idea, seems consistent with your diaconal call, go ahead and implement it in your own parish and your own diocese. Don't wait for General Convention to act. Act yourself.

(See “Nesbit” on Page Twenty Three)

