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**Believe what you read,
Teach what you believe,
Practice what you teach.**

Diaconal Ordination 2011

Archdiocese Ordains 14 New Permanent Deacons

Although the skies were dreary, hearts and souls were beaming inside the Cathedral of Mary our Queen on May 14, when Archbishop O'Brian ordained 14 of our brothers to the order of deacon. In front of a packed house, the Archbishop remarked on the depth of their commitment, the richness of their experience, and the gift that the Archdiocese has been given in their vocation. We wish them well in their new assignments and keep our new brothers and their families in our prayers.

The new deacons received the following assignments:

Deacon R. Donald Awalt
Saint Joseph, Cockeysville

Deacon Donald P. Battista
Saint Peter the Apostle
Oakland

Deacon Harold C. Bradley
St. Michael, Frostburg
St. Peter, Westernport
St. Gabriel, Barton
St. Joseph, Midlan
St. Mary, Lonaconing
St. Ann, Grantsville

Deacon Paul G. Cooke
Saint John, Westminster

Deacon Michael Joseph Currens
St. John the Evangelist,
Frederick

Deacon Michael A. Dvorak
St. Joseph, Eldersburg

Deacon David J. Ebner
Saint Ignatius, Ijamsville

Deacon Brent L. Heathcott
Our Lady of The Fields,
Millersville

Deacon Jerry Jennings
Saint Peter's, Libertytown



Fourteen men, the largest deacon class in more than a decade, were ordained to the permanent diaconate on May 14 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore. (Photo credit: The Catholic Review/Richard Lippenholz)

[Click here to view a video report of the ordination.](#)

Deacon Scott Lancaster
Saint Louis, Clarksville

Deacon Timothy Joseph Moore
Saint Timothy, Walkersville

Deacon Stephen R. Roscher
Saint Charles Borromeo,
Pikesville

Deacon George A. Russell
Catholic Community
of South Baltimore

Deacon William Senft
Cathedral of Mary Our
Queen. Baltimore

One Yet Many: Life in God and Life Among Deacons

Archdiocesan Deacons “Come Away” with Christ

by Msgr. Nicholas P. Amato

***Note:** The 2011 annual Archdiocesan retreat for deacons took place April 1–5 at the Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville. The gathering of 72 deacons was the largest ever, and the feedback from many of those in attendance indicated that it was a well-run, worthwhile, and successful retreat. Father Nicholas Amato, who shares his own thoughts of the weekend in the article that follows, gave us much encouragement in our prayer life as he broke open the topic of “One Yet Many: Life in God and Life Among Deacons.” We are grateful to the Archdiocese and Father Nicholas for this special “time away” from the vineyards for nurturing our spirituality, building fellowship, sharing liturgy, and supporting each other in prayer.*

✠ Dcn. Skip Comegna, Chair, Ongoing Formation Committee



Msgr. Nicholas P. Amato

Dear Brothers,

Each morning for nine consecutive days as I pray the breviary, I have kept the list of your 72 names within it and read through it before I begin. My prayer in this “novena” is that the calling to which you have responded continues to draw you to a deeper awareness of your union with Jesus Christ.

Memories of our weekend retreat together in the opening days of April still linger. It was a wonderful experience of the brotherhood you share and the desire you have to be one with Christ. I am grateful to God for the gift of having been with you.

Speaking of the breviary, as I write these lines I have just finished praying Matins and the following words from St. Augustine that were part of the second reading (Wednesday of the 5th Week of Lent) say it all.

“God could give no greater gift to us than to make his Word, through whom he created all things, their head and to join them to him as his members, so that the Word might be both Son of God and son of man, one God with the Father, and one with all. The result is that when we speak with God in prayer we do not separate the Son from him, and when the body of the Son prays it does not separate its head from itself: it is the one Savior of his body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us and in us and is himself the object of our prayers. He prays for us as our priest, he prays in us as our head, he is the object of our prayers as our God.”

What a remarkable mystery is revealed to us in our prayerful union with the Lord. What a joy it is to testify to the relationship that is formed from that union in our preaching to God’s People.

As I recall the importance of needing to “come away” awhile as Jesus often did from the crowds and communities to which he belonged, to be in silent presence with the Father, I wondered how fruitful the “time away” was for you as a group. I did not wonder for long, for Skip Comegna sent me your evaluations and I was able to read each of them. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. You seemed to find the presentations helpful, the experiences of contemplative

prayer moving, the sharing in small groups very supportive, the social time life giving, and time for private prayer and reflection important. To the question “What did you like least about the weekend?” the typical response was “The weather.”

Responses fell into four categories — the following quotes are representative of each.

Experience of Contemplative Prayer

- ❖ “It is difficult to put words around the experience of contemplation. The moment you start to talk about it, you are out of the experience.”
- ❖ “Good tie-ins with the homily.”
- ❖ “Each of these exercises allowed me to grow through prayer. I enjoyed this retreat for it showed me a way to minister to others by sharing these practices.”
- ❖ “The progression of seeking God through our natural and spiritual being to the depth of contemplation was extremely insightful.”
- ❖ “The entire experience – from this presentation to all the others – has deepened my awareness of, and appreciation for, the presence of God in my life.”
- ❖ “Contemplation is difficult for me. The mantra and breathing were helpful.”
- ❖ “The images and words added ‘tools’ to reflect and meditate. Contemplation remains difficult.”
- ❖ “Experiencing the movement of seeing God face-to-face through the process of reflection, meditation, and contemplation was most helpful.”

Sharing in Small Groups

- ❖ “Nervous at first about sharing with deacons I didn’t really know, but it was a fantastic experience of spiritual community.”
- ❖ “Helps one to understand our gifts and talents and how they relate to all our relationships especially in ministry.”
- ❖ “Exercise with small groups was one of the best parts of the weekend.”

To page 3

One Yet Many: 2011 Deacon Retreat with Msgr. Nick Amato (cont'd.)

From page 2

- ❖ “Good discussion on our needs as a community. Would have liked to see tie-ins with our ministry.”
- ❖ “Hearing stories of fellow deacons was great.”
- ❖ “Enjoyed and valued meeting with the men in my small group and sharing our insights. Very productive spiritually. The second meeting of our small group was even more moving and valuable for my vocation. Gained new perspective and insights, as well as new friends.”
- ❖ “Initial reaction to “faith sharing groups” was a knee-jerk reaction of “Do we have to?” The writing and individual reflection was an excellent step in the movement towards experiencing spiritual community. It gave focus and personal awareness that was enhanced by reflection of the group.”
- ❖ “Re 4th conference ‘Living in Oneness: What Will It Take?’: a step towards greater depth. Gave substance to the need to share my journey with others for my own as well as others’ benefit. The written portion was important.”
- ❖ “Connectedness and integration of our experience of life with one another was helpful. Though each one’s experience may be different, there are similarities.”
- ❖ “Good use of small groups. Grateful for the chance to speak and be heard.”
- ❖ “Small group sharing – entering into trust with one another – was powerful. The feedback completed my story.”
- ❖ “Sharing was open, deep – trust was assumed, appreciated, and empowering. The feedback affirmed our common experience of trusting when we have to say, ‘Oh God, don’t fail me now!’”
- ❖ “The experience, sharing, and large group discussion were all helpful.”
- ❖ “The deep sharing in our group blew me away. I didn’t know any of the men, yet with their faith and stories, a bond developed and I began to understand and have a sense of communion. This helps to translate to communion with God.”
- ❖ “The sharing worked at some level. It needed more time. I was impressed with the acceptance each of us showed. Also impressed with supportive responses.”



Social Time

- ❖ “I came to a greater awareness of one another and our connectedness.”
- ❖ “What I liked best was meeting deacons I didn’t know and sharing their stories.”
- ❖ “I also liked being with so many deacon brothers.”

Beyond the Weekend

- ❖ “Looking forward to incorporating what I learned daily into my prayer life and seeing if our Deacons’ Wives Support Group might want to consider an exercise or practice at our meetings. This conference really brought it all together!”
- ❖ “Would hope that the Emmaus group I am a member of becomes interested in contemplative prayer.”
- ❖ “Our group shared different experiences, yet we each felt an affinity with each story and gained understanding of our own experiences. We decided to meet again after the retreat – for continuing prayer and contemplation.”
- ❖ “I actually got involved in the ‘reflect, meditate, and contemplate’ scheme and found a place that was enlightening. Looking forward to incorporating it in my daily exercises.”
- ❖ “There is need for constant awareness of being in God’s presence and God in us.”
- ❖ “The process and tools given should be very useful to get started – baby steps!”

Over my 40 years of ministry as a preacher of the Word, I have on occasion thought, “What if I woke up one day and no longer had the desire to preach God’s Word” — what would I do? Granted it is a lot like that child who conjures up thoughts of things that “go bump in the night!”

What I have come to realize over the years is that from our human loves and relationships with others, there is not that fear of “What if...?” In those cases the relationship itself sustains the energy, joy and hopefulness that are both the present and the future of the two individuals.

The same is true of our relationship with Jesus Christ, but it does take maintaining and a willingness to grow. So I leave you with the challenge to continue to be men of prayer, knowing that a relationship with Jesus Christ that is grounded in daily presence will never disappoint you.

My list of 72 will remain in my breviary as a remembrance of you. Thank you for the gift of three memorable days together.

Your brother in Christ,
Nicholas (Amato)

Special Dates to Remember

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

May 1, 1979 Ray Britt	May 19, 2007 Frederick Bauerschmidt Lee Benson Kevin Reid Steven Rubio Harbey Santiago Phillip Seneschal George Sisson H. W. "Todd" Smith David Tengwall	James Prosser Robert Shepard Willard Witherspoon, Jr.	Anthony Norcio Gregory Rausch Gerald Roberts James Ryan Henry Siarkowski Edward Sullivan Ralph Trautwein George Wachter James Westwater Thomas Yannuzzi
May 2, 1982 William Nairn	May 21, 2005 Thomas Beales Keith Chase Joseph Cinquino Richard Clemens Joseph Knepper Lawrence Matheny Fred Passauer Jeffrey Sutterman Martin Wolf	May 26, 1979 Frederick Schoennagel	June 7, 1972 Joseph Schultz
May 8, 1993 Robert Vlcej	May 23, 1998 John Chott	June 7, 1975 Miguel Sainz	June 8, 1996 Charles McCandless
May 10, 2008 Edward Whitesell	May 23, 2009 James Barth Michael Baxter Clifford Britton Thomas Cook Michael Dodge Douglas Kendzierski Timothy Maloney John R. Martin Douglas Nathan	June 7, 1992 Kevin Brown Peter Calabrese	June 9, 2001 Gary Ingold Rodrigue Mortel
May 17, 2003 John Ames Wardell Barksdale Richard Bolgiano John Comegna James DeCapite Gary Dumer Michael Flamini John Hawkins Fred Mauser Ray Moreau Martin Perry Edward Kernan Nickolas Pitocco Gregory Rapisarda Alex Rodriguez John Sedlevicius Mark Soloski James Sullivan		June 8, 1977 Daniel Roff	June 20, 1981 Charles Cook
May 19, 1990 Edison Morales		June 9, 2001 Gary Ingold Rodrigue Mortel	June 21, 1981 Frank Hodges
		June 11, 1977 Daniel Roff	June 23 John Gramling (1974) James Benjamin (2001) Seigfried Presberry (2001) Mark Ripper (2001) Ronald Thompson (2001)
		June 12 George Evans (1971) James Clack (2004)	June 24, 1979 James Monaghan
		June 15, 1996 William Albaugh Carl Anderson Jhan Harris William Jauquet Joseph Krysiak Francis Laws Dean Lopata Paul Mann	June 26, 1999 John Langmead Joseph McKenna David Page Victor Petrosino Herman Wilkins

The Deacon's Call

Newsletter of the Baltimore Deacon Community

May–June 2011

Issues are published bimonthly, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The deadline for articles is on the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Your comments and ideas for future newsletters are welcome. We need articles! Please consider writing a brief article on an aspect of your ministry or a review of a book you have read or a film you have seen. Please email comments to any member of the Communications Committee:

Mark Soloski, Chair

Dean Lopata

Lee Benson

Jan Smith

Angela Martin

Will Witherspoon

IN MEMORIAM

May

George Collins.....May 6, 2011
Harry G. Carpenter.....May 5, 2005
Watson Fulton.....May 21, 2005
Michael Zusi.....May 21, 2006
Norman E. Colson.....May 24, 2001

June

John T. Martelle.....June, 2002
James L. AwaltJune 14, 2008
John J. BriscoeJune 17, 2007
Arthur L. Micozzi.....June 18, 2008
Walter R. ShipleyJune 20, 2007
Herman Grabenstein.....June 21, 2006
T. Russell Gibson.....June 21, 2007
John R. Simpson.....June 26, 2007

DEACON BIRTHDAYS

May

7th.....John "Skip" Comegna
8th.....Joseph Cinquino
9th.....James Westwater
11th.....J. Kenneth Pivec
13th.....Michael Flamini
17th.....Frederick Schoennagel
22nd.....Robert Keeley
24th.....Anthony Grillo
24th.....Ralph Trautwein
25th.....Keith Chase
25th.....Victor Petrosino
25th.....Francis Zeiler
28th.....John Rafter
30th.....Steve Rubio
31st.....Richard Stine

June

4th.....Matthew Podniesinski
6th.....Seigfried Presberry
6th.....Charles Baynes
12th.....Joseph McKenna
12th.....Michael Dvorak
13th.....Alan Rose
16th.....George Antczak
16th.....Leroy Biemel
17th.....Leroy Moore
17th.....James DeCapite
18th.....Karl Bayhi
19th.....John Chott
23rd.....Douglas Kendzierski
25th.....Charles Hiebler
25th.....Francis O'Keefe
28th.....James Mann
29th.....Donald Miller
29th.....Simon Driesen

DPB Election Results

The newly elected members of the Deacon Personnel Board are:

- Mike Dodge - Neumann vicariate
- Dave Page – Seton vicariate
- George Sisson – Seton vicariate
- Carol Matheny – Wives, Seton vicariate

They will take over the reins from the following Board members, whose terms are expiring, at the annual planning meeting on June 4:

- Paul Mann – Neumann vicariate
- Dean Lopata – Seton vicariate
- Fred Mauser – Seton vicariate
- Jan Smith – Wives, Seton vicariate

Look for more on the Board and these folks in the next newsletter!

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

May

- 7thHugh & Nancy Mills (50)
- 9thMarty & Nancy Wolf (31)
- 10thGeorge & Joyce Evans (53)
- 11thJohn & Anne Rafter (43)
- 17thThomas & Janet Yannuzzi (36)
- 18thDonald & Pat Miller (48)
- 20thDoug & Lisa Kendzierski (22)
- 22ndAlbert & Mary Chesnavage (68)
- 22ndJoseph & Dolores Krysiak (56)
- 23rdKeith & Pauline Chase (19)
- 26thFred & Kathy Passauer (32)
- 29thMatthew & Georgianna Podnieszinski (57)
- 31stJohn & Angela Martin (36)

June

- 2ndBill & Louise Senft (27)
- 3rdMichael & Julia Dodge (38)
- 4thSiegfried & Frances Presberry (34)
- 5thDave & Cathy Tengwell (40)
- 9thDarrell & Ruth Smith (38)
- 10thFred & Mary Alice Mauser (44)
- 10thRon & Sherry Thompson (44)
- 14thCharles & Ann McCandless (42)
- 15thJohn & Joan Boscoe (54)
- 17thH.W. "Todd" & Jan Smith (39)
- 20thMichael & Leigh Currens (24)
- 20thWilliam & Patricia Jauquet (41)
- 22ndMichael & Kimberley Dvorak (15)
- 22ndScott & Denise Lancaster (26)
- 23rdJohn & Pat Gramling (55)
- 25thLeroy & Kathleen Moore (45)
- 25thKevin & Lisa Reid (11)
- 25thJames & Camillus Prosser (34)
- 27thJames & Joan Benjamin (47)
- 28thGreg & Susan Rausch (42)
- 29thRobert & Carol Lehr (43)

Blessed or Stressed?

Living a Holy Life in Today's Challenging World

Retreat with Fr. Jack Lombardi, Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, June 17-19, 2011

In today's fast paced world how can we lead Christ-centered lives? Have we gained so much money, comforts, and possessions that it's difficult to embrace peace?

How was Christ both "contemplative" and active and an example for all of us? Do you really honor the Sabbath? Do you seek holy silence? How much do you stay on the treadmill of busyness and how much do you allow the culture to keep "pushing" you?

When was the last time you really made a retreat? You will discover how develop a sacred, sacramental life, foster mindfulness in your daily living, understand how "activism" can demolish you, families and churches, recognize the signs of "workaholicism," and detoxify and sanctify your life at this weekend retreat experience.

Is simplicity really possible in today's world? How can the saints and other holy people help us lead grace-filled lives? Learn to avoid extremes and embrace moderation!

So send up an SOS by joining us on this weekend away. Embrace on this leisurely retreat on the "Sacredness of Simplicity," and learn ways how it is possible in today's world.

This semi-silent Retreat includes spiritual conferences, holy silence, Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, confessions, five meals, free time for reflection, the beautiful Catoctin Mountain scenery, modern and pleasant accommodations and more...

The cost is \$185 per person, which includes housing, linens, facility usage, commuter fees, administrative fee, and five meals. A nominal fee will be added for the Friday evening meal.

For more information, contact Fr. John J. Lombardi, Administrator of St. Peter's Church in Hancock and St. Patrick's Church in Western Maryland, by calling the church office at 301-678-6339 or by email at officestpeter@verizon.net.

SAVE THE DATES!

Seton Vicariate Meetings

June 7 • 6:30 p.m.
St. Timothy Church, Walkersville

June 28 • 6:30 p.m.
St. John Church, Severna Park



CONVOCATION 2011

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2011
Bolger Center, Potomac, MD

Can you help? Contact [Skip Comegna](#).

Pastoral Care of Couples Who are Cohabiting

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are all painfully aware that there are many Catholics today who are living in cohabitation. The Church must make it clear to the faithful that these unions are not in accord with the Gospel, and to help Catholics who find themselves in these situations to do whatever they must do to make their lives pleasing to God.

First of all, we ourselves must be firmly rooted in the Gospel teaching that, when it comes to sexual union, there are only two lifestyles acceptable to Jesus Christ for His disciples: a single life of chastity, or the union of man and woman in the Sacrament of Matrimony. There is no “third way” possible for a Christian. The Bible and the Church teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman and opposes same sex unions.

We have three groups of people who are living contrary to the Gospel teaching on marriage: those who cohabit; those who have a merely civil union with no previous marriage; and those who have a civil union who were married before. These people are objectively living in a state of mortal sin and may not receive Holy Communion. They are in great spiritual danger. At the best - and this is, sadly, often the case - they are ignorant of God’s plan for man and woman. At the worst, they are contemptuous of God’s commandments and His sacraments.

Of these three groups, the first two have no real excuse. They should marry in the Church or separate. Often their plea is that they “cannot afford a church wedding,” i.e., the external trappings, or that “what difference does a piece of paper make?” — as if a sacramental covenant is nothing more than a piece of paper! Such statements show religious ignorance, or a lack of faith and awareness of the evil of sin.

The third group, those who were married before and married again outside the Church, can seek a marriage annulment and have their marriage blest in the Church. Please remember that divorce still is no reason to refrain from Holy Communion as long as they have not entered into another marriage or sinful relationship. Many Catholics are confused on this point.

Christ our Lord loves all these people and wishes to save them — not by ignoring their sin, or calling evil good, but by repentance and helping them to change their lives in accordance with His teaching. We, as His Church, must do the same. In accord with this, I would remind you of the following:

1. People in the above three situations cannot receive the Sacraments, with the important exception of those who agree to live chastely (“as brother and sister”) until their situation is regularized. Of course, those in danger of death are presumed to be repentant.
2. These people may not be commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, not only because of scandal,

but even more because one commits the sin of sacrilege by administering a Sacrament in the state of mortal sin.

3. Nor are such people to be admitted to the role of sponsor for Baptism or Confirmation, as is clearly stated on the Archdiocesan Affidavit for a Sponsor. It is critical for the sponsor to be a practicing Catholic — and can anyone be seriously called a practicing Catholic who is not able to receive the sacraments because they are living in sin?
4. When it comes to other parish ministries and organizations, I feel it best to leave these situations to the judgment of the pastor. Prudence is needed, avoiding all occasions of scandal. We must see their involvement in the parish as an opportunity to work urgently to bring such people to repentance and the regularization of their lifestyle.
5. Many of these sins are committed out of ignorance. I ask that our pastors preach on the gravity of sin and its evil consequences, the 6th and 9th Commandments of God, and the sacramental nature and meaning of Christian marriage. Our catechetical programs in our parishes — children, youth, and adult — must clearly and repeatedly teach these truths.

A Church wedding does not require some lavish spectacle and entertainment costing vast sums of money. (Indeed, how often we have seen the most costly weddings end in divorce in but a few months or years!) While beauty and joy should surround a Christian wedding, we must remind everyone that it is a sacrament, not a show.

6. Those who are married outside the Church because of a previous union are urged to seek an annulment through our Marriage Tribunal. If it can be found that the first marriage lacked some essential quality for a valid marriage, the Tribunal can grant an annulment.

Your pastor can help someone start a marriage case for this purpose. It is important for such couples to continue to pray and get to Mass even though they may not receive Communion, until their marriage can be blest in the Church.

Our popular American culture is often in conflict with the teachings of Jesus and His Church. I especially urge young people not to cohabit, which is sinful, but to marry in the Church and prepare well for it.

I congratulate and thank those thousands of Catholic married couples who role model the Sacrament of Marriage according to the teachings of Jesus and his Church.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,
Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan
Archbishop of Santa Fe
April 3, 2011

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BOOKS OF NOTE: AMERICAN GRACE

by Deacon Ron Thompson

In *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (Simon & Schuster, 2010), Harvard University's Robert Putnam and Notre Dame's David Campbell present the results of two of the most comprehensive phone surveys ever conducted on religion and public life in America. The results of the interviews in 2006 and 2007 reveal that America is a religious nation, religiously diverse and tolerant. However, in recent decades, the nation's religious landscape has been reshaped.

According to the authors, a social scientist and a political scientist, America has suffered three seismic shocks in the area of religion:

1. In the 1960s, the country experienced the libertine sexual revolution. During the '60s and early '70s, the baby boomer generation was at the epicenter of social, sexual and political turmoil, and a large number of the boomers alienated themselves from religion and conventional morality.
2. This tumultuous period produced an aftershock that led to growth in conservative religion, especially pronounced in evangelicalism. During the '70s and '80s, American evangelicals had a cultural presence most noticeably in the political arena where a theological and political conservatism converged (the religious right).
3. A second aftershock began in the '90s and is still reverberating today—a growing number of young Americans have come to disavow religion. For many of the young, their aversion to religion is rooted in unease with the association between religion and conservative politics.

All is not lost: 83 percent of Americans report belonging to a religion; 80 percent are absolutely sure there is a God. However, only 39 percent report being an active member of a church, compared to 16 percent of Australians, 9 percent of Italians and 4 percent of the French.

Disturbing is that young men are part of the population who are turning away from religion. People in each successive decade are attending church one week fewer per year than people born in the previous decade. Secularization is becoming stronger in America.

It is interesting to juxtapose the '50s with the '60s. In 1954, America added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. In 1956, America added "In God we trust" to our currency. In 1962, a scant six years later, the Supreme Court forbade state-sponsored prayer in schools and the following year the Court banned mandatory Bible reading in schools.

Focusing on the past two decades, the book introduced the "nones" to describe those who have no specific denomination. The number of "nones" has increased since the '90s, which coincides with an increase of those who say they never attend church. Nones comprise 20 percent to 30 percent of post-boomers. Interestingly though, most of the nones believe in God and an afterlife. Many say religion is important in their lives. A disproportionate number of nones have been raised in non-religious backgrounds and are drawn from center to left in the political spectrum, maybe as a backlash to conservative religion. When asked why they rejected religious identification, most respond that it is not for theological reasons but that they see

religious people as hypocritical, judgmental, and insincere and because they think organized religion focuses too much on rules and not enough on spirituality.

Regarding the Catholic faith, I found these statistics interesting:

- The average age of Catholic converts today is 65.
- One-third of Catholics today are congregation shopping.
- Catholic drop-outs are greater in number than converts.
- Over the last 30 years, Catholics have remained about 25 percent of the population, possibly because of the influx of Catholics from Latin American nations.
- Latinos comprise 58 percent of Catholics under the age of 35, 34 percent of Catholics between the ages of 35 and 49, and 15 percent of Catholics age 50 and over.
- 67 percent of young Catholics who attend church regularly are Latinos.

Overall, the Catholic retention rate is 63 percent.

A fascinating part of the book's findings, which the authors admit show correlations and not cause, relate to who are the happiest people. These people are also better citizens and volunteer more. The answer—religious Americans. Frequent churchgoers are more likely to:

- Give to a charity
- Do volunteer work for a charity
- Donate blood
- Help someone find a job.

BOOK REVIEW (cont'd.)

The primary predictor of generosity is the strength of one's religious commitment. Even those who only attend church occasionally are more generous than those who never attend church.

Religious Americans are twice as active civilly as secular Americans. They are more likely to belong to a civic association and take part in political life than secular Americans. Religious Americans score significantly higher on an index of empathy and altruistic values.

What I found intriguing is that close friends in church who discuss religion frequently with family and friends and take part in small groups at church are extremely powerful predictors of generosity, good neighborliness, and civic engagement. Moreover, these religious friendships are powerful in predicting not only religious good works but also secular good works. Religious ties are a kind of "supercharged friendship."

Get this—Americans whose closest friends are all religiously involved are 50 percent more likely to help neighbors or strangers financially or otherwise compared with Americans

Now, more than ever, the Catholic Church needs to reach out to the young and provide them with Gospel values and solid Church teaching. Let us not be afraid to provide theological food for their souls.

who say none of their closest friends are religiously involved.

So, religious based social networks lead people not just inward to the church but also outward to that wider secular community in terms of giving, volunteering and participating in civic life.

As mentioned above, religious people are happier people, feeling more fulfilled.

In closing, I would like to make two points based on the book's findings. First, young Americans are seeking to fill a void in their lives in secular America. They seem to be searching for a theological underpinning, something to hold on to in our uncertain world. Now, more than ever, the Catholic Church needs to reach out to the young and provide them with Gospel values and solid Church teaching. Let us not be afraid to provide theological food for their souls. Secondly, those who were connected with the surveys were shocked to discover that social networking among regular churchgoers is a very powerful indicator of charity—both within the church and in society. God forbid that church attendance continues to fall. In addition to the tragedy of not partaking in the Mass and the treasury that Christ left us, charity will also be reduced when most needed.

COMMITTEES

Deacon Personnel Board
Chair: Fred Mauser

Policy Committee
Chair: Frank Zeiler

Communications Committee
Chair: Mark Soloski

Ongoing Formation Committee
Chair: Skip Comegna

Placement Committee
Chair: Kevin Reid

Are you are interested in serving on a committee? Just email the appropriate committee chair.

Current Emmaus Groups

St. Ephrem Fraternity
2nd Tuesday of each month
10 a.m. — Immaculate Conception
Contact: Deacon John Gramling
410-823-0694

Harford County - St. Stephen
4th Friday of each month
7:30 p.m. — St Mark, Fallston
Contact: Deacon Simon Driesen
410-457-0451 or
Deacon Chuck Hicks
410-879-2496

St. Lawrence
3rd Friday of each month
8:15 a.m. — Shrine of the Sacred Heart
Contact: Deacon Ray Moreau
410-464-4005

St. Vincent Fraternity
Contact: Deacon Mike Flamini
410-563-1783

The Amen Corner
Last Thursday of each month
Noon — An Poitin Stil Irish Pub
Contact: Deacon Ken Pivec
410-661-1469

Holy Trinity
2nd Tuesday of each month
6 p.m. — Holy Trinity, Glen Burnie
Contact: Deacon Kevin Brown
410-544-6330

Urban Emmaus Group
2nd Saturday of each month
8 a.m. — St. Peter Claver/St. Pius V
1546 N. Fremont Ave., Baltimore
Contact: Deacon Will Witherspoon
443-255-0270

Deacon Families of Central Maryland (includes wives)
Fourth Sunday (location changes)
Contact: Deacon George Sisson
301-473-4800

If you have started a new Emmaus Group, please provide the pertinent information to [The Deacon's Call](mailto:Deacon's Call) so we can include it in future issues.