



THE Journey

Volume I, Issue V

January 2009

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Wow! 2008 is over already? Whoever said it, they were right - time flies when you are having fun!

2008, of course, will always be a



memorable year for me, since I was ordained a deacon and priest during the year and was assigned to BVMC as the parish priest.

Father Adam

As we head into the new year, 2009, we find ourselves asking, what will the new year bring to our parish?

Well, there is that magic month of May 2009, the month that all have been waiting for, the month that the mortgage will change, will lower, the month that we will be able to breath a little. This is true; however, we can not get too comfortable.



2010 will be the first true year of the new mortgage, and it will be 2010 that we get a better picture of our financial status. Until then, we must keep fighting the good fight!

Churches around the country are feeling the economic pinch and many are closing their doors. We are fortunate though because through hard work and prayer, the activities such as PolishFest and weekly BINGO have given the parish the means to support the life of our parish.

Change and Challenge in the new year

I am confident in our ability to continue to support the parish by giving up time to

parish activities to help support the parish financially. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful church!

Now, to the really important matter, FAITH! Since the summer, I have seen and shared in the excitement of the reborn interest in sharing our faith with those in and out of our parish

family. Mass attendance is increasing, participation in our new ministries is increasing, and participation in our different activities such as Bible Study and Jonah's Journey are on the rise as well. We are a busy parish! Busy in the faith of our Lord

and Savior!

Part of keeping the atmosphere here at BVMC fresh and exciting is by constantly changing and reimagining the ways we can worship and share our faith with one another and with those who are not already part of our family of faith. This month we will see the beginning of a new Adult Religious Education program that will include Bible Study, Newcomers Classes, Denomination Study Course and much more.

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Blessed Virgin Mary
Of Czestochowa
NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Father Adam Egan, Pastor

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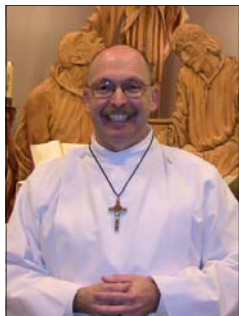
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Parish Office Hours:
Mon - Thu, 9am - 2pm

Sacristan's Corner: WHAT IS A DEACON?



“And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God

to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty.....These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them.” (from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 6).

The ministry of the diaconate is relatively new to this parish; indeed, the deacon's program in the PNCC lay dormant for a period of time, brought back to function because of a shortage of priests. So, just what is a deacon, and what can he do in his ministry to a parish?

First of all, it is important to realize that a deacon serves his bishop, and is assigned to a parish as the need is perceived by him. It is a servant ministry. The ministry is divided into five categories: sacramental, liturgical, caring, teaching, and ad-

ministrative. Classically, the deacon is viewed as a person standing in the doorway of the church, with one foot inside and one foot outside. He is commissioned with bringing the church to the world, and the world to the church.

Deacons are men who are called by God, trained by the Church, and ordained by the bishop. There is an application process, during which the person who aspires to the diaconate must exhibit a true discernment of his call, good character, and basic abilities and talents. There is a rigorous program of study, mentoring, and practicum (work in the field). The curriculum includes biblical studies, liturgy, theology, ministry, spirituality, church history, and homiletics (preaching).

There are several “minor” orders that are conferred along the way, reflecting ancient, traditional functions of clerics, and also the level of study and experience completed. Preceding the Minor Orders is the ceremony of “Tonsuring”, after which the candidate is elevated to one or more of the orders of Porter, Lector, Blesser, Acolyte, and Subdeacon. Tonsuring involves a snipping of hair from the crown of the candidate's head, marking him as

one who is committed and dedicated to the service of God. It is a solemn and meaningful rite for the cleric and the congregation, who will for the first time, see someone who has been raised up from their midst, wearing clerical garb. The new cleric and his parish will each view each other in a very new way.

As this series progresses, I will explore more deeply this Order of Deacons. Hopefully, I will shed more light on this distinctive ministry and the preparation and rewards involved in answering God's call. I ask your prayers and patience as I walk this path that has been laid out before me.

“Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons.”



(from 1 Timothy, chapter 3.)

AMEN.

Submitted by: Bob Shovah

This is the first part of a series of articles.

Change and Challenge *cont.*

And of course, the highly anticipated U2Charist is in the works. As of the date this newsletter was printed, I do not have a date yet for the event, but it is going to happen soon!

The new year has also brought to the parish a new website! Please check out www.BMVC.org to see the exciting and fresh design of our parish's presence on the web. There is information pertaining to all of our worship services, youth programs, history, contact, photos, videos, information about our organizations, a calendar, and of course for the children, the famous coloring book (my daughter loves it).

The new year also brings in a new parish committee, and I would like to congratulate and thank our new members; **Dick Malchow** - Parish Committee Chair, **Jeanmarie Vollmer** - Parish Committee Vice-Chair,

George Urciuoli - Treasurer, **Anthony Koslowski** - Recording Secretary, Trustees - **Ken Koslowski, Regina Pollack, Steve Cremins, Diane Brennan, Maryanne Willey, Ellie Schmidbauer, Jack Cramer, Nancy Scarchilli**, Parish Tribunal - **Ed Sheehan, Dick Mossey**, and Parish Auditors - **Pat Mossey, Tim Brennan, Mark Peplowski**.

Thank you to all who have taken on the responsibility of the operation of the parish and thank you to those who served last year on the committee.

Let us continue to pray that by living out the Gospel of Jesus in our lives, we will continue to grow our faith and our church here in the Capital Region, for the Greater Glory of God. Happy New Year!

Until next month, Peace be with you!

Journey of a Clergyman

Since my arrival here at Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, I have been amazed at how many times the theme of a 'journey' has come up in the life of the church. Of course, our newsletter is called "The Journey" and we have named our new youth group "Jonah's Journey" and when I decided to share with you my life of work and struggle towards the priesthood, I could only sum it up in one word, "journey".

I was asked to give a brief biography of myself and what led me to

answer God's calling to the ordained priesthood. Well...sparing a few details (otherwise you would be reading long into next year) here we go. I was born in Baltimore Maryland in 1980 (yes that makes me 28 years old). I was raised by my mother and grandparents in Central Pennsylvania, Hanover to be exact (also known as the Snack Food Capital of the U.S.). Church life for me was sporadic at best, although faith was always taught to me by my family. I was baptized Roman Catholic, but we went to just about every church possible! My grandfather taught me the Ten Commandments, the typical prayers, and how to be a man in today's world. Thanks Pop!

After graduating from High School, I headed to Pittsburgh PA, where I would really begin the 'Journey.' At this point, I had engrossed myself in Theology and Spirituality, and had begun to study in a pre-seminary program at La Roche College. It was during this time that I began to discern a call to the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. After some prayer, retreats, discussions, more prayer, and just a little more prayer after that, I was all set to head to Rome after

graduation from La Roche for my seminary career. My life was planned out...or was it.

There is a saying, "you want to make God laugh, tell Him what 'your' plans are." Well, that is exactly what I did, I told God what I was going to do. He is still probably laughing at me, and to make sure that I knew His will be done, he sent the love of my life to me, my wife Jeanne.



Now, this was not completely unexpected. I was always writing papers in support of married clergy in the Roman Catholic Church, so the fact that I began a family was not a surprise to many. It only strengthened my cause for a married priesthood. I figured at that point I would teach theology and go about my life, however, that itch inside of me, that little whisper in my mind did not leave. After some prayer and discussion with family and friends, I decided to leave the Roman Catholic Church and ventured out into the world of Anglicanism, namely, the Episcopal Church.

My family and I quickly found peace within the walls of the Episcopal Church. The liturgy was very similar, the preaching was great, the people were friendly, we were home. My senior year of college I found myself in an internship program within an Episcopal parish and I learned a lot of what it was to be a parish priest. I followed the three priests of the parish for six months seeing the ins and outs of the life of a clergyman, and I was very excited to continue on in my journey.

It was with this in mind, that the next step in my journey (our journey, my family included) we found ourselves in Bangor Maine as I began my studies towards ordination in the Episcopal Church. Things seemed well. We were happy, but again, I found myself asking God, "is this what you want of me?"

I was quite comfortable in the "Anglo-Catholic" way of the Episcopal Church but uncomfortable in the low-church, protestant side of Anglicanism. I began to wonder if I could continue the rest of my life hoping that I would always somehow end up in a more "Anglo-Catholic" parish.

I began to discern who I really was, and the answer was, "Catholic".

To be continued next month....

Prayer List

Irene Calka
 Jean Egan
 Alice Houser
 Carl Layman
 Shirley Molloy
 Robert Nagle
 Nancy Pascale
 Elizabeth Peplowski
 Veronica Pilitowski
 Henry Radzysinski
 Stanley & Edna Radzysinski
 Michael Robochik
 John Scarchilli
 Fr. Jim Stevenson
 Jean Tomaski



To add or remove a name from the parish prayer list please see Father

New Envelope Schedule for BVMC

The following is the new schedule for collections/envelopes for our parish. Some dates have been changed, some have been combined and others created.

Annual Dues	January 4, April 19, July 12, October 11
Mission Fund	February 1, August 2
Music Scholarship Fund	January 25
National Church Center	March 8
Offering for Flowers	April 5, May 3, July 5, December 20
Youth Fund	August 30
Clergy Pension Fund	January 11, June 21
Feast of Brotherly Love	September 13
Seminary Fund	December 27

All other weekly and feast collections are the same. Please notice that your envelope number may have changed as we updated our parish list. Thank you!



Melannie, Grace, Kendra, and Hunter sing and sign "Go Tell It on the Mountain" during Mass on Christmas Eve



Father Adam delivers the Gospel to the faithful, Ryan serves as acolyte



BVMC's newest Acolytes are Melannie and Grace

Of Note:

Hall Rental

The Parish Hall is a great venue for parties, receptions, showers, business meetings, family reunions, and for every other occasion. Call 453-2258 to inquire.

Bingo

Bingo is held every Thursday at 7:15pm. Come early and enjoy a fantastic meal prepared by the Częstochowa Polish Kitchen staff. Then try your luck at bingo. Another way to support our fundraising efforts.

Future Articles - Your Input

Articles for inclusion in the newsletter should be sent or given to Father Adam.

Saint of the Month

St. Sebastian

**Feast Day:
January 20th**

**Patron Saint of
Athletes.**



Nothing is historically certain about St. Sebastian except

that he was a Roman martyr, was venerated in Milan even in the time of St. Ambrose and was buried on the Appian Way, probably near the present Basilica of St. Sebastian. Devotion to him spread rapidly and he is mentioned in several martyrologies as early as 350 A.D.

The Legend of St. Sebastian is important in art, and there is a vast iconography. Scholars now agree that a pious fable has Sebastian entering the Roman army because only there could he assist the martyrs without arousing suspicion. Finally he was found out, hauled before Emperor Diocletian and delivered to Mauritanian archers to be shot to death. But he was found still alive by those who came to bury him. He recovered, but refused to flee. One day he took up a position near where the emperor was to pass. He accosted the emperor, denouncing him for his cruelty to Christians. This time the sentence of death was carried out, St. Sebastian was beaten to death with clubs.

Sunday Readings

January 4th - Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:22-40

January 11th - Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Acts 10:34-38
Mark 1:7-11

January 18th - 1 Samuel 3:3 - 10, 19
1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-10
John 1:35-42

January 25th - Jonah 3:1-5, 10
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20