



Office of the Permanent Diaconate

DEACON NEWS

Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey

Summer 2008

Pope Benedict XVI visits NY April 19, 2008

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Please also remember in your prayers all the ill and convalescing members of our Diaconate family. May the Spirit of God, the healer of souls, bring His healing grace and peace upon the ailing, their families, and all who care and minister to them.



Pope Benedict XVI Celebrates Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral for NY- NJ-CT Priests, Deacons and Consecrated Religious

by Deacons Joe Mantineo-Al McLaughlin
"DEACONS ON TV" at St. Patricks. In the



upper right hand corner is John McKenna. Behind him is Joe Caporaso. Behind Joe is Earle Connelly and behind him Joe Mantineo.

Located below John McKenna is John Sarno and next to him is John

Hogan. This photo was taken off a TV screen. The timing is at the beginning of the entrance procession and every one is watching the Pope who has just passed by, John McKenna is right on the aisle and could have touched him. What a moment!!! *From Joe Mantineo*

Al McLaughlin writes: Although I was so grateful to receive the news that I was one of the few lucky ones to receive a ticket to participate in the Pope's Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York, I was wondering if this Papal Eucharistic celebration would be as moving and as emotional as the one I attended at Giant Stadium in (continued on page 2)

Popes Visit, continued from page one...by Deacon Al McLaughlin...

our great archdiocese. Like the early Apostles who were eagerly awaiting for that First Pentecost and the power of the Spirit to move them and guide them, I was waiting for the opportunity to see and hear the Vicar of Christ. I vividly recalled how charismatic his predecessor was and I was hoping that Benedict's message was going to light a fire within me and the rest of the faithful here in America. On Friday night, I deliberately went to sleep early because I knew the next day would begin before sunrise. There was so much excitement and anticipation running through my veins that sleep never had a chance to do its job!

(photo by Deacon Paul Kliauga)



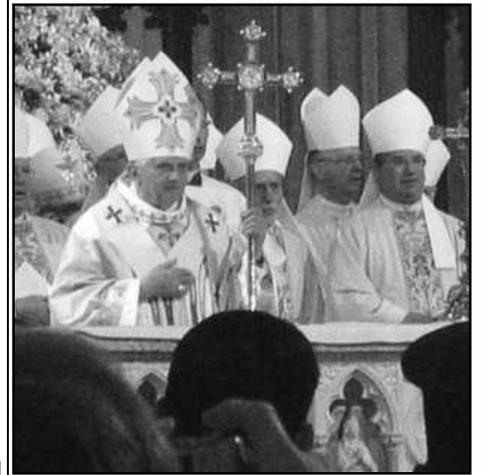
By 6:00 am, 150 of us boarded busses and left for New York. As we moved closer to St. Patrick's we saw thousands of people lining up on the streets in hopes of getting a quick glimpse of the Bishop of Rome. Their faith alone was enough to charge all of us who were traveling on those busses! When I arrive at my seat, I couldn't believe that I was only 7 rows from the altar and would be able to see everything. I looked around and in this gathering of over 2,000 people it didn't matter if you wore a mitre, a crown or a veil on your head; it didn't matter if your stole hung down over your shoulders or across your chest; we were all one; all waiting to be nourished by the Successor of Peter and shortly after 9:00am time seems to have stood still!

A little after 9:00 the Cathedral shook as we heard the crowd from outside voicing their love and approval for the Pope and suddenly the doors that were keeping us in and everyone else out opened and there was our spiritual leader standing within our midst. St. Patrick's erupted with a thunderous ovation and all of us were consumed by the spirit and person of Benedict XVI. He walked to the sanctuary and turned and waved to all us as if to say thank you but it was we who were

(photo by Deacon Paul Kliauga)



thanking him for not only coming to our great country but for being the true and faithful follower and exemplar of Jesus the Christ. He spoke from the heart and he challenged us to bring the Light of Christ back into our parishes, homes, communities and places of where we work. I felt as if he was sending us out just like the next day's First Reading recalled when the Apostles ordained Stephen and the other deacons and sent them out into the world. He reminded us of who we were "working" for and could there ever be a greater boss! His deep and reverent manor in celebrating the Mass added so much to the sanctity of the day. Benedict's gentle smile and loving waves seemed to have touched and communicated with each individual person who had the honor of being there. At the end of the Mass before he gave us his blessing, he thanked us for being there and praying for him.



(photo by Deacon Paul Kliauga)

He told us how he would never have imagined that one day he would be the Successor of Peter with his faults and transgressions and yet here he was through the power of God. Here was the leader of the Catholic Church asking us to continue to pray for him because he was a sinner in need of prayers. That was pretty humbling for me because if the man in white is a sinner, is there any hope for me?

I can honestly say that this day will go down as one of the best days in my life. Like the thousands of people who have been touched by this intellectual, spiritual and pastoral leader, this pope will always have a special place in my memory and heart!

Formation News

By Fr. James Teti, Director

The men of the class of 2011 are finishing up the second semester of the first year of studies. They are concluding courses on Christology and the Gospels. In pastoral formation they are working on proclamation and some elements of preaching. From June 20-22 they will attend their annual retreat at St. Mary's Abbey retreat center in Morristown. Msgr Timothy Shugrue, former director of the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of Newark, will be a keynote speaker.

A Tribute to the Celebrated Life of Rita McKnight



Based on an article by Valerie D. Lewis-Mosley, Christ the King Church Jersey City

The life of Rita McKnight is also the reflection of her life in Christ Jesus. Her steps were ordered in the Word of God. Her faith walk was "Follow Me as I Follow Christ". So walk with me as I take a short sojourn into the celebrated life of Rita McKnight.

Christ the King parish of Jersey City, New Jersey affectionately called her "the Deaconess". Just like Phoebe, she was on the road with Christ; teaching, supporting, imploring, beseeching, and carrying Christ to all who would receive Him. Rita served as the director for Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults. She carried Christ to the sick and the infirmed as a Eucharistic Minister.

She prepared other lay ministers to be Extraordinary Ministers of Communion. She instructed couples in Pre-Cana for the preparation of the sacrament of Matrimony, setting the example for sacramental marriage by the witness of her forty-one years as a devoted and virtuous wife to Deacon Keith.

Rita studied with, supported and stood beside her spouse Keith in his preparation as an ordained minister of the Permanent Diaconate of the Catholic Church. Rita was always faithful to the ministry and to the mission of Jesus through the Diaconate and through her service to the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus.

She was authentically Black and truly Catholic as proven by her witness in faith and her encouragement. She challenged the Black Catholics of the

Archdiocese of Newark to get involved in the National Black Catholic Congress. She was the fire that set our souls ablaze and propelled our participation not only in the National Black Catholic Congress but as well in the annual parish workshops for ministry in the African American Community.

She was the impetus in the youth participating in the Rites of Passage in 2000 and 2001. Rita was the coordinator for the New Jersey Gathering of Black Catholic Women that was held at Seton Hall University: A call for the women to gather in prayer and praise.

Rita was always there for those who were sick and in need of the Presbyter and prayer and anointing. She was an evangelist preparing the way of the Lord. She was an evangelist carrying the message that help was on the way for those in need of help and that the help was Jesus.

The calls of condolences have come from near and from far, Europe, Mexico, all across the United States, Canada and from Africa and Asia. A universal response for one whose mission was universal for that is what it means to be truly Catholic. Rita was Catholic in every sense of her being. She was not what I call a supermarket Catholic like those who pick and chose which teachings of the church they will put into their shopping cart and which teachings and beliefs they will leave on the shelf.

My sister in Christ took on the full mantle of the One, True, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; the First Christian Church of Jesus Christ and she was not ashamed to preach and teach the authentic unadulterated scripture of Jesus Christ! It was like a fire burning in her bones! She could not help but to believe, to preach and to teach. Her love was Jesus and He was the center of her Life. Everything she did was through him, with him and in him. She was a witness for Jesus Christ!

The commissioning at the close of the Mass is to go and make disciples. Rita was in the disciple making business. She prepared acolytes and altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers. She developed the ministry of hospitality and bereavement to serve others truly adhering to Jesus' call to be of service. She was a prayer warrior even on her own sick bed and she would call others and pray with them and for them. She worked as a support leader for others battling breast cancer encouraging them every step of the way, even doing the breast cancer camp out and walk when her own body was wracked with pain. She never stopped talking about Jesus. She challenged, confronted, and corrected all to walk uprightly with the Lord.

Rita along with her husband Deacon Keith coordinated the evangelization team of the parish of Christ the King. She was instrumental in the 1998 revival led by Eat the Scroll Ministry. She believed in the benefits of daily prayer through scripture – "lectio divina", liturgy of the hours and the holy rosary; all which she did faithfully everyday. She stood in support of God's holy anointed and ordained.

She was a liaison to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Rita has been acknowledged by her ministry with a Pontifical Citation. She was a good and faithful servant. Our sister left no stone unturned when it came to being a living stone for the cornerstone of her faith, Jesus. She was just and righteous to the law of God.

In this walk of hers even in her suffering she stood upright. She was with the full mantle of Christ, linking her sufferings with that of Jesus. She did not complain, did not challenge God, did not falter in faith but she kept on walking with Christ. She did not waiver. She did not grow faint of heart but soared up on eagles' wings. She waited on the Lord. She **PUSHed** on; that is she kept on **Praying Until Something Happened**.

That something was being received into the arms of Glory. Even in suffering and death she was faithful to God, church, faith, family and friends. She served God to her last breath, praising Him by her witness.

She believed in prayer, she prayed unceasingly. She never stopped calling on the sweet name of Jesus. Even in her sickness she came faithfully to Mass daily praising God. Like Anna the prophetess she could be found always in the temple praising God. This past Lent she formulated weekly song and devotion for the Divine Mercy, teaching others about the unending mercy of God. She was a praying sister leaning on the everlasting Arms. It was her body that was sick and afflicted not her spirit and not her soul.

Rita even showed us how to die in Christ. Her steps were ordered in the word of God. The night that she passed into Glory I slipped off her socks from her feet. I marveled at how tiny her feet were. "So tiny a foot for such giant footprints, footsteps so large that few would be able to fill them". The scripture says beautiful are the feet that carry the word of God.

She was a mother and grandmother. A mother whose greatest prayer was for her son and grandchildren that they remember their faith for they knew from whom you were taught! She presented her children to the temple of God encouraging them and raising them in the ways of the Lord.

The last months of her life she referred to me and her angel when we came together to read daily scripture and to pray. Little did she know that she was the wind beneath my wings, an example of true discipleship a virtuous woman and good and faithful servant. Always praying and always praising "My being proclaims the Greatness of the Lord, My Spirit Finds Joy, In God My Savior." Let us follow her as she follows Christ. For she truly loved the Lord and the Name of Jesus was sweetness to her lips!

Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia. All Praise and Glory Be to God in the name of Jesus! Rest in Peace my sister until we meet again. Amen

A Deacon Couple

by Jean Andrews

There was something awesomely special about them that caught me and held me in wonder of what made them beautifully holy. I looked at that pair of old grass stained sneakers, permanently creased by the feet they enclosed. Their heels were worn unevenly so like an odometer chronicling, registering the miles sometimes walked and sometimes run. I saw toes scuffed, one worn through which told tales of rocks and logs and broken pavements.

My fingers touched a knotted lace, now mended having yielded to a force too strong, repaired caringly, quickly as to not loose pace. Three tips of the aged grey laces were gone now baring raveled, frizzled ends while a portion of the fourth still clung to its own end, steadfastly struggling to cover what it once protected.

The terry clothed insoles were threadbare, perfumed by sweat with hints of dried blood from blistered feet they shod. Under-soles no longer marked by clear patterned treads noted quietly, really the pressure, the weight on the feet with-in and the road taken.

Oh, Lord, let us two be like that old pair of sneakers, belonging together, and one. Make us worthy to be worn by You to go wherever You choose for however long You choose. Slip your Divine Feet into us that we too can become wholly holy, a pair of old sneakers.

Very Important

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Practical Homiletics

by Deacon Mike York

This article will tell my secrets in creating and delivering great homilies...and I am going to share all of them. Now that I have your attention...the reality is that all my secrets are not mine at all, but the compilation of many priests and deacons who willingly through direct communication or my observing and imitating them, revealed the essence of delivering a "block-buster" homily, or at least trying my best to do so.

What I just described occurred over the course of my entire life, not just in the years of formation or after ordination. Each of us has heard thousands of homilies...maybe we didn't pay attention or remember the content, but we sure observe delivery, technique, body language etc. We subconsciously assimilated what we thought was the best. As an example, rarely do I deliver a homily from the ambo, but like to walk in front of the congregation and be at their level, getting close and making eye contact. I wouldn't do it any other way. But, that approach may not be for everyone...

Practical homiletics - I use the term not professing to say it's original, but to reflect my experience. My exposure to prison ministry taught me that I must deliver a very practical message, only one or two points that can be easily understood and immediately applied. I always hope to not only give such, but to take away a practical message from any homily. I must explain the theology in a way that shows what it means in my life and the lives of those I am preaching too. What this says to me - a homily can't be taken "off the shelf", it's got to be original. While it may comprehend the same explanation of the Scriptures, it does so always with the congregation in mind - how does it apply to them? Finally, every homily is entrusted to Mary, to be guided by her Spirit, the Holy Spirit!