



Deacon Claude Lester.

Deacon Lester Named Head of Parish Services

Deacon Claude Lester has recently been named director of the Office of Parish Services for the diocese. His job entails ensuring that each parish is responsive to the needs of its parishioners, through interaction with the parish council.

A permanent deacon, he has a wide background in the Church. Formerly director of religious education at St. John the Evangelist Parish on Humboldt Street, Deacon Lester has been active in the Continuing Education for Religion Teachers (CERT) program, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and was an instructor of the permanent deacon program of the diocese. He was also the first chairman of the Diocesan Board of Education in 1981.

"For more than 10 years now I have been involved in the exciting movement of the Church which encourages a broad base of participation in the activities and decision-making processes in the local Church," Deacon Lester said. "I really enjoy working with a group of people and giving them ideas and getting them fired up to implement the next step."

He succeeds Sister Jean Rodman, SSSJ, coordinator of the Office of Parish Council Development and

parish services for the past seven years.

"The appointment of Claude enables the diocese to have an office with a director whose primary interest and responsibility is service to the parish," said Sister Mary Hilaire Gaelens, RSM, director of the Division of Special Pastoral Ministries.

The Office of Parish Services provides in-service training and goal-setting sessions to set up parish councils or activate existing councils. The office will provide a council with whatever advice and planning it needs to become functional.

Deacon Lester defines a parish council as a consultative group of parishioners working with the pastor in the decision-making process for the parish. "I hope to enable parish councils and committees to come to know and to properly assume their responsibility and privilege as members of the faith community," he said.

Deacon Lester, his wife Ellen, and their four children are members of St. John the Evangelist Parish on Humboldt Street. He holds a degree in education and is completing graduate study in theology at St. Bernard's Institute.

No Intercommunion Yet, Pontiff Tells Protestants

Kehrsatz, Switzerland (NC) — Pope John Paul II June 14 praised ecumenical efforts but refused to soften his position against intercommunion between Catholics and Protestants.

"We may not give a false sign," the pope said at a meeting with the Swiss Protestant Evangelical Association June 14 in Kehrsatz, a village outside Bern, Switzerland's capital.

Shared communion is the goal of unity, and not the means toward it, he said, addressing the group of Protestant leaders. The pope acknowledged the pain of separation felt by Christians of different denominations who want to pray together at the Eucharist, but said that to agree to intercommunion just to avoid pain would be delusory.

"It would be of no use to do away with pain of separation if we do not remedy the cause of this pain, which is precisely the separation itself," the pope said.

Catholic and Protestant churches differ on substantial doctrinal issues, such as the role of the church as the mediator between God and man and the role of the ministry. Intercommunion is one of the most controversial practical issues between Catholics and Protestants.

"We believe that the celebration of communion at separate tables means disobedience towards Christ's call and a limitation of his generosity," said J. P. Jornod, president of the Swiss Protestant Evangelical Association.

"By the way," he added, "many members of our churches feel this separation to be unbearable and simply overlook it for they consider it counter-testimony."

The pope echoed his words for last December's 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther and acknowledged mistakes by all sides. He also cited a need for objective study of the historical disagreement.

The pope noted that Switzerland this year celebrates the 500th anniversary of the birth of Huldrych Zwingli, who with John Calvin was a key Swiss figure in the Protestant Reformation.

"We cannot forget that the work of their reform remains a permanent point of contention between us and makes our church divisions something still present," the pope said.

"On the other hand, no one can deny that the elements of the theology and spirituality of each one of them maintains the deep ties between us," he added.

The pope also called for "the frank acknowledgment of reciprocal wrongs and errors committed in the way of reacting towards each other when indeed each one wanted to make the church more faithful to the will of God."

"Perhaps the day will come, and I hope it will be soon," the pope added, "when Swiss Catholics and Protestants will be able to write the history of that troubled and complex period together and with an objectivity rooted in deep fraternal charity."

Church officials had expected some protest demonstrations. Instead, Protestant leaders enthusiastically welcomed the pope at Kehrsatz's ecumenical center, built in 1975 for Catholics and Protestants.

At the papal meeting, Marguerite Stucky-Shaller, a representative of the Evangelical Church, asked the pope to work for women's rights.

"In the churches of the world, whether they accept women in their ministry or not, women feel unwelcome, second-rate," she said.

Churches give "lip-service to the value of women's position," but church doctrine and practice make it evident that women "are regarded as incomplete human beings," she said.

She asked the pope to "give a clear sign that the church will overcome the antagonism between men and women."

The pope said that questions on women's rights and dignity should be part of discussion among churches.

"We may hope that they lead to a common clarification and formation of opinion," he said.

A Baptist minister reported that a layman asked the pope why the church could not take the small step of allowing intercommunion for the sake of ecumenism.

Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, head of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, responded for the pope and said that for Catholics intercommunion was the biggest step, added the Baptist minister.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Why People Don't Go To Mass

Where have you been lately?

In May, Father Nellis, pastor of Clyde and Savannah, North Rose, Rose and Meringo, wrote to me: "Father O'Brien wants to do some updating studies at Louvain, Belgium, and wants me to join him. It's for five weeks, June 25 to July 30. Could you take care of the parishes while I'm gone?"

Father O'Brien, having reached the age of 70, was retired from the pastorate of Horseheads last June. I phoned Personnel Director Father Latus' secretary, Marcia Urschel of St. Paul's parish, Webster: "How many retired priests do we have in the diocese?" She replied: "76." Most of these have been in the pastoral priesthood. "How many priests on active duty, Marcia?" "About 275 diocesan priests."

A few of the 76 are invalids and live at St. Ann's Home. A few others are at St. Ann's Heritage. A few have left the diocese to do pastoral work in other dioceses. Most retired priests are living in some local rectory and assisting in the parish.

Father O'Brien has rented an apartment one mile from his old church -- Mary, Our Mother, in Horseheads, and is on the preaching circuit. He has a docket of engagements for retreats: to priests and lay persons; parish renewals, spiritual counseling, etc. Father Nellis is of an academic cast and will bring fresh insights to his parishioners.

Did you agree on five weeks coverage?

No. I said: "Let me take two weeks, and find someone else for the other three." It turned out that he was able to engage priests for three weekends: Father Tom Valenti and a classmate from Georgia, a Father Smith; but no one for daily Mass. There are between 30 and 50 people who assist at daily Mass, since Clyde has a tradition of devotion to the Eucharist. With much praying, and assisted by parish secretary Connie Tavano, they got Father John Dillon to come from Sodus for daily Mass, excepting Thursdays. On these days, Mass was celebrated by the ebullient

Father Freemesser who preached long and loud, and cheered the souls of his listeners. However I did stay an extra week, to July 14.

Why?

I was greatly disturbed to find many people from strong Catholic families have stopped going to Mass. I spent 13 years of my priesthood in Clyde, and know the people well. Some of the careless had been fine altar boys; some active in our parish school and projects; all of them are dear to my heart. To see them in this state of spiritual torpor was a crushing blow. So I announced, "My contract with Father Nellis was to finish tomorrow after Mass. But I am so appalled at the number of people I knew as fine Catholics now not going to Mass, that I am staying an extra week. When the people see 200 pounds of priesthood stalking the streets, let them recognize him as a kind of sandwich-board man advertising: 'This priest thinks Catholics should be faithful to Mass.'" Only God knows if any good came from this, but I am hoping that this article will remind all non-Mass goers everywhere in the diocese that every Catholic who is able should assist at Mass every Sunday.

Why, do you think, have people stopped going to Mass?

The problem is not just Clyde-Savannah. It is nearly everywhere. With many it is an inadequate understanding of our religion. Others are upset about something: sometimes with changes, sometimes with the priest, sometimes with relatives or friends. But I think the number one reason is the seventh capital sin, sloth. This sin is so unique, so sneaky, that Dante in his famous "Inferno" put it as special and terrible. Sloth paralyzes the faculties of the soul. One who is ruled by sloth is too lazy to love God or his neighbor, because such love or zeal takes too much trouble. Sloth begets tepidity and indifference. "A great sinner may become a great saint, but a slothful person, never." So with patience and with prayer, with love and zeal and concern, each of us must work for the recovery of those souls so precious to God. How terrible to be wandering in the swampland of Sloth!

Sarah Child



All in the Family

He Also Serves Who Only Sits And Listens

I recently picked up an old copy of the Writers Handbook to reread an article by The Gordons, a writing team whose credits include "That Darned Cat" and "Catnapped," one or both of which have been made into movies.

While the piece was addressed to fiction writers, the authors' tips were such that anybody who ever has a conversation with a friend, business acquaintance, etc., could benefit from them.

Writing for some 40 years, The Gordons described what they would have done differently as professional writers if they were to start all over again.

I found lots of ideas I could put to use but the one that struck home was the following:

"... we learned that when we do all the talking, we aren't adding anything to our background as writers. But, when we just sit back and let someone ramble on, it's amazing what we can pick up. It's amazing, too, how a few questions or the show

of a little interest will open up friends and acquaintances."

Or in other words you never learn anything new when you are doing the talking.

How many times I have wished TV talk show hosts might have learned that simple truth. Too many times a guest is cut off in the middle of something very interesting by a banal comment, an unrelated question, the telling of a similar experience by the host.

Unfortunately, I can identify with those TV hosts to some extent. As a print interviewer of some 20 years, I, too, have been guilty from time to time of such conduct.

And, while I've always been aware of this tendency to "take over," it has only in recent years that I have realized I've been thwarting my own purpose.

Older, wiser and more experienced, I, too, have learned that listening without interjecting oneself into the storytelling, except for a pertinent prod now and again, has rewards beyond those one experiences by monopolizing the flow of words.



Chuck-E-Cheese Visits

Chuck-E-Cheese visited St. Rita's Parish on Sunday, June 15, to help collect returnable bottles and cans. The money raised will help build a new school playground. Above, Chuck-E-Cheese poses with assistant pastor Father Raymond Fleming, and some of the children of the parish: Jason and Heather Marino; Peter, Emily, Tom, J.P., Tim and Julie O'Brien; and John Zicare.

Volunteer Call

The Rochester Association and glaucoma screening. Volunteers will be trained by association staff. Interested persons are asked to call Evelyn Hartigan, 232-1111.

Vertical sidebar of small advertisements including '5 THIS', 'BUILDERS REPAIR', 'DNSKI', 'Home', '18', '127', '132', '590', '2', '2'.