

Bishop Clark ordains permanent and transitional deacons

Diaconal ordinations at Rochester Cathedral

By Richard A. Kiley

Although Rochester's Permanent Diaconate program was late in starting compared to others in the United States, the huge backlog of deacons amassed since the program's implementation has leveled off.

This year's 10 acolytes marked the fourth class of deacons to be ordained since the Permanent Diaconate program was implemented in the Rochester diocese in 1978. Including this year's class, Rochester now has 58 deacons working within area parishes.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark conferred the Sacred Order of Deacon on the acolytes in the ceremony, which was concelebrated by Retired Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral on Saturday, June 7.

According to Deacon Albro C. Wilson Jr., who was ordained a deacon in Rochester in 1983, the Permanent Diaconate program was implemented nationwide after Vatican II, when church officials saw the need for deacons to become a more stable presence in the diocese.

The Diocese of Rochester then did its own study, headed by Father Sebastian A. Falcone, to see if the program was a viable one here.

"Bishop Hogan requested to see if it was feasible to have the (Permanent Diaconate) program implemented here in the Diocese of Rochester," said Wilson. Based on the study's findings, the program was started.

All Permanent Deacon candidates must complete a four-year program before becoming permanent deacons. They must attain the equivalent of a master's degree at St. Bernard's Institute, and then spend one weekend a month (nine months out of the year) enhancing their spiritual growth in studies at both the Roman Catholic school on the Colgate Rochester Divinity School campus and the Pastoral Center.

A spring retreat precedes individual assignments in various field ministries. This year's class spent five days at Camp Stella Maris on Conesus Lake.

"Every summer (within the four-year program) they have to do 10 hours a week in one type of ministry," said Deacon Wilson, who has been head of the program for a year after taking over for Monsignor George A. Cocuzzi. "They have a wide variety of field ministries to choose from: hospitals, jails (and) the pastoral center, as well as parish assignments."

According to Deacon Wilson, candidates can only choose one assignment in one type of ministry, so they can attain a wide variety of pastoral experience.

Responsibilities of the deacons, who support themselves through secular work because the diaconate function within the church is a non-paid one, are many.

"Deacons are primarily ordained to service; their ministry is primarily a ministry that deals with people," Deacon Wilson said. "In addition to proclaiming the gospel and preaching the homily, (the deacon) can be the presider at baptisms, weddings, funerals ... the primary sacraments. The liturgical (aspect) is more symbolic of the service ministry he has been called to do for life."

Wilson added that because a deacon is



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Diaconal candidate Brian McNulty takes the vow of obedience, a promise to respect and honor the wishes of the bishop and his successors. Bishop Matthew H. Clark; master of ceremonies Father Louis Vasile, left; and retired Bishop Joseph L. Hogan witness the event.

ordained to Holy Orders, he must remain single if he was single when he was ordained. Also, if a deacon is married when he is ordained and his wife dies, he may not remarry.

All acolytes in this year's class are married, including one deacon whose wife will be ordained an Episcopalian deacon later this month — a first for Rochester.

The two transitional deacons in this year's class are John Hayes and James Mooney. They will become ordained priests in approximately a year. According to Father Michael F. Conboy, director of the priest intern process, the two will now be assigned to area parishes where they will spend the next year, among other things, teaching religious education, counseling, visiting the sick and conducting graveside services under the supervision of the church's pastor.

"During that time the interns meet with me on a monthly basis to review and reflect on their experiences," Father Conboy said. "They will also be meeting with an intern/reflection group, composed of lay people within the parish who serve as a mirror or a reflection for the deacon; the group lets the deacon know how he's coming across."

Hayes, whose home parish is the Rochester Institute of Technology campus parish, has spent the last four years at Immaculate Conception Seminary in New Jersey, where he was president of the Seminary Council for the past year. His clinical pastoral experience came at the Federal Correctional Institute in Littleton, Colorado. Hayes, who attained additional pastoral experience at St. Patrick's Church in Elmira, will be assigned to St. Catherine's Church in Mendon.

Mooney spent his last four years of priestly formation at the Catholic University Theological College in Washington, D.C. An elected member of the university's executive



John Hayes, Leo Aman, and George Burnett prostrate themselves before the bishop as Marian Aman, Patricia Burnett and Lynne McNulty kneel alongside their husbands.

council, Mooney acquired his clinical pastoral experience in Central Islip, N.Y., at the Psychiatric Center on Long Island. He will be assigned to his home parish of St. Andrew's Church in Rochester.

"Both (Hayes and Mooney) come highly recommended," said Father Tom Valenti, diocesan director of seminarians. "They served in positions of leadership in both their seminaries, and they'll both make very good ministers for the city of Rochester."

The following is a list of this year's class of permanent deacons and their home parishes: Leo Aman, St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester; Al Bergeron, St. Joseph's, Penfield; George Burnett, St. Patrick, Owego; Mike Campanelli, St. Cecilia and St. John, Elmira; Greg Kiley, St. John the Evangelist, Clyde; Brian McNulty, St. Augustine, Rochester; Conrado Mercado, St. Michael's, Newark; and William Schmitz, Christ the King, Rochester.


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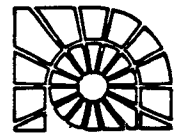
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