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Deacon Christman reflects on his journey to priesthood

John Christman S.S.S. was recently ordained a transitional deacon, and now looks forward to his ordination to the priesthood on Saturday June 4, 2011 at St. Mary Parish in Menasha. John details some of the journey that he and Anthony Marshall S.S.S. have been on since they entered the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

By Deacon John Christman S.S.S.

Seven years ago Brother Anthony Marshall S.S.S. and I began a unique journey. After much prayer and contemplation we had perceived what we considered to be a vocation to the priesthood. Yet another longing whispered within our hearts. It spoke of a particular spirituality, a particular mission. It spoke of the Eucharist, a mystery so vast, wide and deep that we wished to dedicate our lives to exploring and proclaiming its wonders. That whispering voice in our hearts also spoke of community, an essential element of the Eucharist. We both desired to live out our priestly vocation in a religious community dedicated to the celebration, adoration and proclamation of the Eucharist. All this we discovered in the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

And so it was with a mixture of fear and excitement that we set out for Albuquerque, New Mexico in the summer of 2003 to begin an intense discernment of our vocational calling with the Blessed Sacrament Community. Through postulancy, novitiate, first vows, theological studies up to the present, we have persevered in our calling and grown into a close relationship with the Congregation and its Eucharistic mission. So

much so, in fact, that Brother Anthony and I found ourselves desiring a lasting commitment to the Congregation. We therefore requested permission to take our perpetual vows and become lifelong members of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. With great joy and gratitude we were accepted by our Provincial Father Norman Pelletier S.S.S., his council and the entire province.



Deacon John Christman

In preparation for perpetual vows the Congregation asks that all its candidates take part in a three month program of intense prayer, discernment and preparation. While this can be done in one's own province, for Brother Anthony and I an amazing opportunity arose. We were given the chance to join other English speaking members of the Congregation who were also preparing for their perpetual vows in an international program. Moreover, given the special occasion of Saint Peter Julian Eymard's 200th anniversary of birth, the Congregation had something even more special in mind for us. We were to travel to France and spend the first month of our program visiting the places where Saint Peter Julian Eymard lived, prayed, ministered and brought the Congregation into being.

So in the middle of July we traveled to France and joined six other members of

the Congregation preparing for final vows. These Blessed Sacrament scholastics were from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Guided by Eymardian scholars such as Father Manuel Barbiero S.S.S. and Father Andre Guitton S.S.S. we discovered the richness of Saint Peter Julian Eymard's spiritual life and Eucharistic vocation. Amidst the many Marian shrines in France we came to value his great Marian devotion. Throughout his numerous writings and letters we perceived his great love for God and Jesus' "gift of self" in the Eucharist. What we had learned from books in the course of our formation we now experienced firsthand and the impact it had on our understanding of Eymard could not be overstated.

From France we traveled to Sri Lanka where our program of preparation continued with a series of classes geared toward re-exploring the content of our Rule of Life in light of our lived experiences and upcoming perpetual profession of vows.

Thoughtfully organized and prepared by Father Sunil Rupasinghe S.S.S. we were given numerous presentations by differing religious experts. For example, Father Norman Pelletier S.S.S. gave an enlightening presentation on the history of the congregation; Father Nilindra Gunsekera S.S.S. spoke to us of the vow of obedience as seen through the perspective of the New Testament and Bishop Winston Fernando S.S.S. shared with us his reflections on the relationship between the Church and the Congregation.

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Prayers and Sacrifices support Church Vocations

By Father Paul Paider

Spring is always the prime season for graduations, weddings and ordinations. In a sense, all three celebrate the completion of something, whether it be studies or courtship and undoubtedly numerous preparations. But all three milestones also celebrate a wonderful new beginning on life's journey.

This spring St. Mary Parish will be graced to celebrate one of these new beginnings, when we host the ordination and first Mass of our parish son, Deacon John Christman, on the weekend of June 4 and 5. Also, on May 21, Ryan Krueger, (also a parish son of St. Mary's), will have been ordained to the transitional diaconate by Bishop Ricken at the cathedral in Green Bay. About a year from now Ryan will be ordained as a priest for the Diocese of Green Bay. These are two great events in the life of our parishes and are a tangible reminder of the fruits of so many prayers and sacrifices by the faithful in raising up vocations for the Church.

The definition of "Vocation" from the Catechism of the Catholic Church is indeed worth pondering. It states:

"VOCATION: The calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. God has created the human person to love and serve Him; the fulfillment of this vocation is eternal happiness. Christ calls the faithful to the perfection of holiness. The vocation of the laity consists in seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. Priestly and religious vocations are dedicated to the service of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation."

When we hear the word "vocation," we often think of religious brothers and sisters, deacons and priests. The Catechism of the Catholic Church pointedly reminds us that each of us has a unique vocation. Namely, holiness of life by faithfully loving and serving the Lord here, so as to wisely prepare for eternal life. Indeed the very seed-bed of all vocations comes from within the family. I often kid couples on their wedding day that at the heart of their vocation as husband and wife, is that they are called to make a saint out of the other. Then I remind them that for some this may be a bigger project than for others. And they usually chuckle at that remark. The truth is good and holy marriages foster virtuous priestly and religious vocations.

As we rejoice in the ordination of our two parish sons this spring, may we have a renewed love and appreciation for our own God-given vocation, whatever it may be. May we always do our part to foster and encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life through prayer and sacrifice.

God's blessings,

Fr. Paul Paider

The Blessed Sacrament Community and the Mark Christman family would like to announce the ordination of **DEACON JOHN R. H. CHRISTMAN, S.S.S.**

We are honored and blessed to invite you and your family to celebrate with us, along with the priests and religious of the Blessed Sacrament community and Bishop Robert Morneau, Auxiliary Bishop of Green Bay, as our son is ordained to the priesthood at St. Mary Catholic Church, Menasha, WI, on **Saturday, June 4, 2011 at 10 a.m.**

The following day, **Sunday, June 5, 2011**, John celebrates his first Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Mary Catholic Church, Menasha, WI at **10:30 a.m.** We hope you can join us for one or both of these blessed occasions.

A luncheon will follow the ordination on Saturday, and coffee and donuts will be served after the Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday. Everyone is invited to attend these events. Any questions, please contact us at 920-257-4309. Mark and Joan Christman

St. Mary Parish will be sponsoring the Saturday luncheon and Sunday social and all parishioners of St. Mary and St. John Parishes are invited and encouraged to attend. If you are able to volunteer for these events to help with setup, serving and clean-up, please contact the Parish Office at 725-7714.

“Stewardship” for the Streckes - It’s a “Way of Life”

By Sue Streck

I have been asked to tell about the different ways that I have helped at St. Mary's Parish.

In 1977, I took basic Religious Education courses through the Diocese and several summer sessions at St. Norbert's and Silver Lake Colleges. With this training, I became the coordinator for SPRED (Special Religious Education for those with Disabilities) that was started at St. Mary's Parish. We met during the 9 a.m. Mass on Sundays. Parents brought their children with disabilities to school while they attended Mass. The attendance grew to 21 students of various ages.

During this time I had many helpers, which of course includes my family as well as Pam, Katie and Tim Dachelet, Hub DuChateau, Mary Gyron, Sister Laura, Mary Kolasinsky and Judy Henning. This program was funded by the Knights of Columbus, Council 1838 through the Tootsie Roll Drive.

In the mid 1980's the name SPREAD was copy-righted by the Chicago Diocese and we had to change our name to “SPECIAL CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.”

I belonged to the AREA-DD Coordinators throughout the Green Bay Diocese which met monthly. I worked with the Neenah-Menasha ARC becoming involved with “Sabbath Sunday” which was open to all denominations and all parishes in the Neenah-Menasha area.

I was on the Retreat Staff of the Green Bay Diocese which offered retreats for Adults with Cognitive Disabilities. Many of these retreats took place at St. Mary's and throughout the Diocese.

In 1978, I became a Communion distributor at Theda Clark Hospital along with Sister Faustine and Sister Mary Conrad. I was trained for this ministry by Marie Halaychik. During the 70's and 80's I served as a teacher with the Religious Education program and was part of the Confirmation Program.

Then in 1988, Father Michael Noreika asked me and my husband Bob to go to a meeting about parish based marriage preparation classes. We found this rewarding and have since that time been facilitating Marriage Prep classes in the parish in the months of February and October for engaged couples here at St. Mary's and St. John's. There were three couples that helped us in the past, Curt & Beth Dachelet, Andy & Marlene Woyak, and Wayne and Kathy Humski. Now in the past few years, we work with our own four married children. We still offer this opportunity to engaged couples.

In 2005 I retired from some of these areas and worked mainly with students ranging from pre-school to high school who were ready to receive one of the Sacraments.

I am currently serving as secretary for the Nicolet Ladies and love to cook and bake for my family and 13 grandchildren. Bob and I also serve as Eucharistic Ministers at St. Mary's.

My involvement in these various activities has been very rewarding and has brought me great joy. Thank you.

Attention all outdoor enthusiasts and landscapers!

Parish staff has developed plans for the grounds at both St. Mary and St. John. Now we need your help and your plants! If you are interested in lending a hand in cleaning up and enhancing the landscape of both parishes call John Kiefer at 725-7714 for more information. Plants can be dropped off in the 3rd St. parking lot.

Bishop Ricken to host Project Andrew Dinner

Bishop David Ricken is inviting young single Catholic men, high school juniors or older, to Mass and Dinner with him and priests from our area. The Dinner will be Tuesday, June 7, 2011, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Green Bay. After supper, there will be a discussion about the vocation to the priesthood. To register, contact your parish priest, or Fr. Daniel Schuster, Vocation Director, at (920) 272-8293 or 1-877-500-3580, ext. 8293, or e-mail : www.vocations@gbdioc.org.

St. Mary and St. John the Baptist Catholic Churches

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528 Second Street
Menasha, WI 54952
Faith Formation Center
516 De Pere Street



Two Parishes—One Faith

Phone: 920-725-7714
Fax: 920-725-7612
E-mail: jjulius@tcces.k12.wi.us

We are on the Web: menashacatholicparishes.org

Did you know... The St. Mary/St. John weekly bulletin can now be found on the SeekandFind website: seekandfind.com. Search for St. Mary or St. John, Menasha.

What is the difference between a diocesan priest and a religious priest?

A *diocesan priest* belongs to a body of priests (called a presbyterate) who are members of the same diocese and, therefore, under the leadership of the same bishop. The Diocese of Green Bay serves over 346,420 Catholics living in the 16 counties that collectively form the northeast area of Wisconsin.

A *religious order priest* belongs to a specific congregation or community that is bound together by a common mission. Unlike diocesan priests, religious order priests take a vow of poverty and do not own items individually. Most often, religious order priests specialize in a certain type of ministry, such as education, social services, health care or foreign missions.

Deacon John Christman will become a religious order priest with The Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament located in Chicago, IL.

Reflections by John Christman on his journey to priesthood...

The eight of us listened to these talks with great interest, asking questions and engaging the speakers. In addition to these classes, we were given the chance to discover the land and culture of Sri Lanka. We closed our preparation with a five day silent retreat where we disposed ourselves to the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

On October 17th, 2010 at St. Philip Neri's Church in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Brother Anthony and I made our perpetual vows with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. In the presence of our General Superior, Father Fiorenzo Salvi S.S.S., our Provincial Father Norman and an international gathering of Blessed Sacrament religious, Brother Anthony and I committed ourselves to a thoroughly Eucharistic life in the service of the Church and our fellow religious.

It was a characteristically bright and sweltering hot October day in Colombo as we stood in the sanctuary of Saint Philip Neri's Church. Beautiful red and white banners strung from the ceiling slowly swayed to the rhythm of the oscillating fans. The vibrant life of the city could be heard somewhere behind the exuberant songs. And in the midst of all this vivacity and pageantry the eight of us proclaimed our vows with wholehearted conviction. We were welcomed by Father Salvi with a ring and an embrace. Filled with gratitude Brother Anthony and I would like to thank everyone who has supported us in our religious vocation over the last eight years. Your words, prayers and support have strengthened and encouraged us more than you may realize. We thank God for your presence in our lives. We would especially like to thank the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and the Province of Saint Ann for the great care and concern you have shown us throughout our formation. We are honored to join the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Congregation of The Blessed Sacrament

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament was founded in Paris, France, in 1856 by a French priest, Saint Peter Julian Eymard. For 150 years, our priests, deacons, and brothers have reached all continents of the globe and continue the mission begun by St. Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist.

Like St. Peter Julian Eymard, we want the Mystery of the Eucharist to be loved and lived in its fullness. We believe that Christ in the Eucharist has the power to effect a radical transformation in our society and in all people. The power of the Eucharist motivates and strengthens us to work for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

We proclaim the reality of God's love in the Eucharist by our "gift of self" to Him and our brothers and sisters. By prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and an active apostolic

life, we strive to make Christ in the Eucharist better known and loved.

Our Eucharistic evangelizing includes celebrating the sacraments, writing, teaching, preaching, counseling, and working for justice. We publish *Emmanuel*, an award winning magazine for Eucharistic spirituality, and other liturgical and devotional materials related to the Eucharist. We promote a program of Eucharistic evangelization called *Life in the Eucharist* (LITE).

We are active in the ecumenical movement and focus on having the Eucharist be a sacrament of unity. We bring Communion to the sick and shut-ins, especially in hospital ministry. We offer hospitality and minister to priests and religious. In all that we do, Christ in the Eucharist is our inspiration and the center of our personal and community life.