



NDICE NEWS

NATIONAL DIACONATE INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

JANUARY 2024

VOLUME 8 • NO. 2

Promoting the Continuing Education of Deacons

Happy New Year



On behalf of the entire NDICE board, Happy New Year brother deacons and wives! It doesn't seem possible that our last conference was six months ago. The NDICE Board is excited and looking forward to our 2024 Conference which is just six months away. As was decided at our 2023 business meeting, the conference will again be at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Fairview Heights IL. The 2024 Conference theme is **"Being the Eucharist for All"**. We read every comment on the rating sheets from the 2023 conference and did our best to address those that could make our 2024 conference another huge success. As you know, the National Eucharistic Congress will be held at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis from July 17-21, 2024. Historically our conferences were held during the third week of July and began with a 5:00 pm. Sunday mass. In an effort to reduce conflicts with the Eucharistic Congress; ending on Sunday July 21. We moved the 2024 Conference starting day to Monday July 22, again with an opening mass beginning at 5:00 pm. For those who still want to travel on Sunday, we are offering a "meet and greet" that same evening, at a local restaurant, across the road from the Fairview Heights Drury Inn. In response to another suggestion we are offering an opportunity to tour the Diocese of Belleville- St. Peters Cathedral, as well as the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. These are located just a few miles from our venue. On the upcoming registration form, a tour of these sites will be offered on Monday morning July 22. We are still working on the time schedule, but it will be prior to the conference. We are very happy to announce that Bishop Michael McGovern (Bishop of Belleville) will celebrate the

Continued on Page 7

WE'VE DONE IT AGAIN!

2024 NDICE CONFERENCE *Being Eucharist For All*

July 22 - 25, 2024

CELEBRANTS



Bishop Michael McGovern



Msgr. Eugene Morris

Plan now to attend!!



Fr. Joel Seipp



Bishop John Iffert



See Ya Here!

Holy Trinity Parish
Fairview Heights, IL

TO REGISTER VISIT THE CONFERENCE TAB AT NDICE.NET



Bishop Michael McGovern



Msgr. Eugene Morris



Deacon Bill Ditewig



Janet Sullivan Whitaker



Joni Seith



Bishop John Iffert

Your Board of Directors recently approved the presenters line up for this years conference in July.

We acted upon your suggestions for those speakers who were available and we have, once again, assembled a first class lineup for the conference.

In response to your comments regarding presenters, we not only read every evaluation, but base decisions on those comments as well. The information from each and every evaluation is taken into consideration. Please continue to complete your evaluations during the conference and return them as you depart.

Some examples of the changes made just this year:

Based on the evaluations we did not reserve rooms in the 4 - Points Sheraton. Although its the closest in proximity to the conference site many of you stated your stay was less than comfortable.

We also added a **Meet and Greet** and a **Tour of Attractions** in the area which includes area Cathedrals and lunch at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows.

Bottom line, fill out those forms. We actually use them to improve your NDICE experience. We hope you enjoy your stay.

MEET THE PRESENTERS



Born in June of 1965, **Msgr. Eugene Morris** has been a priest of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis since May of 1996.

For two years, he served as the parochial vicar of Saint Gabriel the Archangel Parish in South St. Louis City before moving to St. George Parish and assuming a full time teaching position at St. Mary's High School. In 1999, Msgr. Morris was invited to pursue further studies at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome. He completed a license in sacramental theology in June of 2001 and returned to St. Louis where he began work at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. In July of 2005, he was named director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and the Vicar for Deacons in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, and the next year, under the leadership of then-Archbishop Raymond L. Burke, he established the St. Maximilian Kolbe House of Discernment. Msgr. Morris served as the director of the house for three years while continuing his other duties. He was named a member of the Papal Household in September of 2008. From 2009 through 2010, he was the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen Parish in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, until he moved to the Pontifical College Josephinum and began work as the Director of Sacred Liturgy and Assistant Professor in sacred theology.

Msgr. Morris has served as an assistant professor of Sacramental Theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, a lecturer for the Paul VI Catechetical Institute, and the spiritual advisor to the Marian Catechists in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Since the summer of 2006, Msgr. Morris has been a visiting lecturer at the Liturgical Institute at St. Mary of the

Lake University, Mundelein Seminary. He is also completing work on a doctorate in Mariology at the International Marian Research Institute writing on the Mariological contributions of Cardinal Carberry, former Archbishop of Saint Louis. In addition to these responsibilities, Msgr. Morris has hosted a weekly radio program on WRYT, Catholic radio in St. Louis and is periodically a spiritual director for Inner Life, a program on Relevant Radio. Msgr. Morris also is a weekly commentator on Catholic affairs for the Son Rise Morning Show on Sacred Heart Catholic Radio in Cincinnati. Upon his arrival at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Msgr. Morris has had the opportunity to work with Saint Gabriel Catholic Radio in Columbus. Monsignor frequently give talks on various topics related to the faith, retreats and days of recollection locally and around the United States.



Joni J. Seith is a convert to Catholicism from a culturally Jewish background whose conversion story has been published in Envoy Magazine and shared on EWTN's Journey Home program and presented in detail in her book *Pain of Grace: Living and Suffering with Dignity*.

Joni is the author and illustrator of *Cloud of Witnesses I and II*, and was the Founder and President of Biblically Correct, Inc from 1995 – 2010 and was a member of the Catholic Marketing Network.

As a speaker on the subjects of Redemptive Suffering, prayer, the saints, miracles and her own conversion story, Joni enjoys sharing her love

Continued on Page 3 – Meet

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

ADVERTISE IN THE NDICE NEWS

- Reach 19,000 Deacons
- Affordable Rates
- Free Ad Design Service

Contact

Deacon Gerry Bach

Managing Editor

Editor@NDICE.net



NDICE NEWS

January 2024

Volume 8 • No 2

President/Editor Dcn. Corby Valentine
President-Elect Dcn. Stephen Frye
Secretary Dcn. Wayne Weiler
Treasurer Dcn. John Hempen
Executive Sec. Dcn. Hank Babin
Past President Dcn. Max Roadruck
Wives Rep. Carmen Rendon
Managing Editor Dcn. Gerry Bach
Graphics G Bach Designs

Editorial Advisory Board

Bishop Michael Mc Govern

Deacon Corby Valentine

Deacon Bill Ditewig

NDICE NEWS is published bimonthly by the National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education (NDICE) for the purpose of providing continuing education for those in the permanent diaconate ministry.

www.ndice.net

Continued from Page 2 – Meet

for the Catholic Church and Her teachings to people of all ages and faiths. Joni has given Lenten Retreat talks both to Catholic and non-Catholics alike and has taught Theology of the Body to teens and provides spiritual guidance to women. She has also taught RCIA classes as well as CCD.

Although Joni suffers with a chronic debilitating pain and deteriorating condition called Ehlers Danlos, it hasn't stopped her from spreading the joy of the Gospel which Jesus has handed down through His Suffering Bride, the Church. Joni's candid and unique joy-filled way of seeing God in and through the sufferings in her life is both inspirational and contagious.

Joni earned a BS Degree in Art Education from the University of Maryland and an MSP Degree in Psychology from IPS/Divine Mercy University.

Prior to marriage, she taught Art and co-led group therapy at Edgemoor of Maryland, a residential treatment center for severely troubled adolescent boys. She is a mixed media artist who also enjoys art journaling.

Joni and her husband Deacon Bob Seith are the proud parents of four grown children and four amazing grandchildren. They live in Bowie, Maryland.



A native of Berkeley, California, **Janet Sullivan Whitaker** is a forty-year veteran of parish pastoral music leadership in the diocese of Oakland, California. In addition to her ministry as a composer, recording artist, and storyteller, Janet is an inspiring presenter of parish missions, workshops, and retreats. Dedicated to the enrichment of all who serve in liturgical ministries, her deepest desire is to form and encourage parish musicians and she does so by drawing upon her wealth of wisdom, spirituality, strength, and humor.

Several of Janet's compositions are well-known by the church. Among her most beloved songs are: In Every Age, Here at This Table, The Least of These, Christ Before Us and Day of Peace. Since the release of her debut collection, Land of the Living, Janet has produced several collections and companion recordings of music for the church: Tryin' to Get Ready; These Forty Days: Music for Lent, Passiontide, and Ordinary Time; This Place of Perfect Peace, Plenty: Songs of Hope For Our Time, and Yulesong (an independently produced Christmas CD).

In 2015, Janet collaborated with her fellow composers on Our Common Home, a collection inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si. It includes music by Barbara Bridge, Jaime Cortez, Michael Joncas, Ricky Manalo, CSP, Curtis Stephan, Bob Hurd and Rufino Zaragoza, OFM and offers timely music touching on themes of care for creation, poverty and solidarity.

As a director of music and liturgy, Janet has served at three Oakland diocese parishes, as well as the One Bread, One Cup Summer Youth Liturgical Leadership Conferences at Saint Meinrad Benedictine Archabbey and Seminary in Indiana. In 2022 she joined the faculty of the annual Liturgical Music Institute at The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Lloyd Harbor, New York.

In 2020, Janet stepped away from full-time parish work to broaden her scope of outreach and take on a ministry that includes concert performances, master classes for cantors, parish missions, workshops,

and retreats. She holds a B.A. in Music from CSU East Bay and an M.T.S in Liturgical Studies from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Janet lives in Hayward, California with her husband of 39 years.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, Janet Sullivan Whitaker is a singer, composer, recording artist, and veteran pastoral musician, having served in parishes of the Oakland Diocese for 40 years before her semi-retirement in 2020. Janet's music for the church is published by Oregon Catholic Press in Portland, OR and GIA/WLP Publications in Chicago, IL. Her compositions, widely-known and sung throughout the world, include such beloved favorites as Here at This Table, In Every Age, The Least of These, Day of Peace, and As Christ Is For Us. At the 2008 dedication of the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, CA, Janet's music was prominently featured. During her time as a catechist for youth music ministers for the One Bread, One Cup Conferences at the esteemed St. Meinrad Benedictine Archabbey in Southern Indiana, she composed music that continues to be an integral part of that community's annual ministry to teens and college students. Janet has contributed articles to several publications, such as NPM's The Liturgical Singer and Modern Liturgy. In 2022 she served on the faculty of the Liturgical Music Institute at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY. Though no longer active in full-time parish ministry, she is now devoted to traveling the country to assist in the ongoing formation of pastoral musicians.

Janet holds a BA in Music (1999) from California State University at Hayward, CA, and an MTS in Liturgical Theology (2008) from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. She is a member of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), and of NATS, and ACDA.



Deacon Bill Ditewig was born and raised in Peoria, Illinois, and he spent high school and college studying for the Catholic priesthood. After leaving the seminary, he joined the United States Navy, serving for 22 years as a linguist (Hebrew and Russian) and cryptologic officer in assignments at sea and in various locations around the world. He retired from the Navy as a Commander in 1993.

Throughout his military service, Bill remained active in various church ministries, including administering a remote parish in the absence of a resident pastor; he would later write a book on that experience. In 1990, while still on active duty in the Navy, he was ordained a Catholic deacon for the Archdiocese of Washington, DC by Cardinal James Hickey.

Bill has served as Associate principal of a Catholic high school and as a diocesan official in several dioceses. From 2002-2007 he was the Executive Director of the Secretariat for the Diaconate at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC. From 2007-2011, he was Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Saint Leo University in Florida. After teaching at Santa Clara University in California for six years, Bill retired from full-time teaching.

Bill has a BA in Philosophy, an MA in Education, another MA in Pastoral Theology, and the Ph.D. in Theology from the Catholic University of America. He has written a number of books, chapters and articles, focusing on ministry in general and on the renewed ministry of the Catholic diaconate in particular. He is a frequent presenter at study days, convocations, retreats.

Continued on Page 4 – Meet



A favorite celebrant last conference, he was requested by you to do a presentation at this conference. **Fr. Joel Seipp** was ordained on Saturday, July 11, 2020 by Bishop Edward K. Braxton.

Fr. Seipp, is the oldest child of Lawrence and Shirley Seipp, and has three younger sisters, Amy, Anna, and Laura, and is a fourth generation parishioner of St. Clare of Assisi Parish in O'Fallon, IL. Joel attended St. Clare School from kindergarten through eighth grade, and was an altar server from fifth grade until his graduation from O'Fallon Township High School in 1999. After high school, he attended Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Southwestern Illinois College Police Academy, Lindenwood University, Cardinal Stritch University and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

Joel held several positions with the City of O'Fallon before embarking on his fourteen year career in Law Enforcement, nine of which was with the Cahokia Police Department, where he served as a Patrol Officer, School Resource Officer, and Major Case Squad Investigator.

Joel's path from police to priest began in 2014 when he stepped down from his law enforcement career to follow his call to pursue the priesthood for the Diocese of Belleville where, since 2022 is the pastor of St. Andrews parish in Southern Illinois.

One of his favorite things about Saint Andrew School is being around the kids throughout the day and observing and participating in their energy and joy that they create in and out of the school building. "The teachers and staff are like one big happy family and it is a joy to watch the students and staff interact."

He loves traveling in the States and abroad. In fact, when he was a teenager, he was chosen to be a student ambassador to China. He also enjoys motorcycling, golfing, Texas Hold 'em, kayaking, shooting guns, beer, and cigars. As far as sports teams go, Father Seipp is a Cardinals fan, averring, "No other team is there."



John C. Iffert was born on November 23, 1967 in DuQuoin, Illinois.

In 1992, he entered Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein Illinois as a seminarian for the Diocese of Belleville where he earned a bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology and a Master of Divinity degree. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 7, 1997 by Bishop Wilton Gregory.

Over the years, Father Iffert served as parochial vicar, administrator, and pastor of many different parishes and concurrently in numerous diocesan positions including as a member of the Diocesan Personnel Board, Defender of the Bond for the Tribunal, Spiritual Moderator for both the Belleville Deanery Catholic Youth Organization and the Teens Encounter Christ movement, Vicar Forane, diocesan Co-Vicar for Priests, member of the Diocesan Finance Council, and as a member of the College of Consultors.

He was appointed Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Belleville in 2020.

On July 13, 2021, Father Iffert was appointed Bishop of Covington. He was consecrated and installed on September 30, 2021 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, Kentucky. 

Mark Your Calendars

NIDCE 2024 – July 23 to July 25



**CATHOLIC
SUPPLY®**
OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

RELIGIOUS & INSPIRATIONAL GIFTS | BOOKS | BIBLES
STATUARY | JEWELRY | ROSARIES | MEMORIAL ITEMS
NATIVITY SETS | ADVENT ITEMS | WALL CROSSES
SACRAMENTAL & SEASONAL GIFTS and HOME DECOR
CANDLES | CLERGY APPAREL | CHURCH SUPPLIES & FURNISHINGS

Family owned & operated since 1960
We're one of the largest Catholic stores in the United States!

MAIN STORE
(Across the street from Ted Drewes Frozen Custard)
6759 Chippewa (at Jamieson)
St. Louis, MO 63109
(314) 644-0643

Store Hours: Monday - Saturday 9:00am to 5:30pm
or visit us anytime, online: catholicsupply.com®

Have a
Truly
Meaningful Lent



BEING EUCHARIST TO ALL: COVENANT, LAMENT, MEMORY, DOXOLOGY AND THE DEACON

Deacon William T. Ditewig, Ph.D.



In this two-part series in the NDICE Newsletter, I want to introduce some of the themes we will discuss in greater detail during the upcoming Convention in July. The goal of these articles and our gathering next summer is to explore ways we deacons can assist all people (including ourselves, of course) in extending the grace of the Eucharist from the altar to the people, places, and situations of our contemporary world. Everyone has specific responsibilities in this regard; we are, after all, a “priestly people.” Within this assembly, united in Eucharistic faith, the various liturgical ministers from servers, readers, and music ministers to bishops, deacons, and priests, all have their own unique functions to carry out. Our focus is on the deacon. In these brief articles I want to touch upon several fundamental themes we have inherited from Judaism, our elder brothers and sisters in faith: covenant, lament, memory, and doxology, and to consider them through the lens of the deacon at Mass. Appreciating these Jewish influences can enrich our understanding of our own liturgical life.

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:3-4

Continued on Page 7 – Ditewig

2024 NDICE REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Preferred Name on Badge _____

Check One: Deacon Deacon - Candidate Deacon - Widow Other

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____

(Arch) Diocese _____

Is this your first time at NDICE? Yes No If yes, were you invited by a past attending Deacon? If so, Please list his name: _____

Name of Spouse (if) attending _____

I/We would be interested in going on a tour of area attractions ie.: Arch, Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, St. Louis Cathedral. (Itinerary not finalized at time of print)

Registration Policy

Although we would prefer you register and pay on-line for accuracy and ease of record keeping, we realize that would prove a hardship for some. So, we include a paper form for your convenience. We ask you follow these simple instructions:

ALL FEES MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE

Make checks payable to NDICE • Send Registration Form and payment to:
Deacon Hank Babin • 4460 Miranda Dr. • Olive Branch, MS 28654

CANCELLATION POLICY

Prior to July 1, 2024 Amount Paid Less \$50 Cancellation fee.
July 1-19 Amount Paid LESS 50%

_____ Deacon or Deacon-Candidate Only (\$295.00) = \$ _____
 _____ Deacon or Deacon-Candidate & Spouse (\$395.00) = \$ _____
 _____ Deacon Widow NO CHARGE
 _____ Other Participants (Vendors etc.) (\$445.00) = \$ _____

LUNCHES

Box Lunches – Sandwich, Chips, Cookie & Soda, Tea, or Coffee

_____ **HONEY BAKED HAM Monday** (\$15.00) = \$ _____
 _____ **HONEY BAKED TURKEY Monday** (\$15.00) = \$ _____
 _____ **Meatless COBB SALAD Monday** (\$15.00) = \$ _____
 _____ **CHICK-FIL-A Sandwich Tuesday** (\$15.00) = \$ _____
 _____ **VEGGIE WRAP Tuesday** (\$15.00) = \$ _____
 _____ Banquet Only (Included in Registration) (\$70.00) = \$ _____

Choose Banquet Meal Entree

- Meat – TBA
 Vegetarian – TBA

(If you have any special dietary needs, please specify on a separate sheet.)

HOUSING – We recommend the following area hotels

Drury Inn \$119 per night (Includes Breakfast & Evening Kickback)

Evening Kickback = Soup, Salad, Hot Entree & 3 Drinks (over 21)

Hampton Inn Fairview \$119 per night (Includes Breakfast)

These are Special Rates – Ask for the NDICE Block of Rooms

Contribution I would like to make a charitable contribution to NDICE = \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

**For a complete list of area hotels and rates contact: Deacon Gerry Bach
 618.978.3888 or Deacon 1948@charter.net
 or visit our website NDICE.net/Conference**

NDICE 2024 Tentative Schedule of Conference Events

Holy Trinity Parish – Fairview Heights, IL

Sunday, July 21, 2024

12 Noon **Registration Opens**
 5:30 pm **Meet N' Greet**
Pappos's Pizza
 15 Ludwig Drive • Fairview Hgts.

Monday, July 22, 2024

8:30 am Morning Prayer/**AREA TOUR**
 Incl. Lunch Nat'l Shrine Our Lady of the Snows
 5:00 pm **Opening Mass** HTC

 Bishop Michael McGovern
 Bishop Diocese of Belleville

7:00 pm **Welcome Address** CC



Corby Valentine
 NDICE President

7:30 pm **Key Note Address** CC
 Bishop Michael McGovern

8:30 pm **Social Time/Cash Bar** CC

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

7:00 am **Breakfast on your own** AHR

8:15 am **Morning Prayer/Mass** HTC
 Msgr. Eugene Morris

9:30 am **Session 1 - Part 1** CC
 Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist:
 Plan of Evangelization/Mission



Msgr. Eugene Morris

10:30 am **Break/Snacks** GS

10:50 am **Session 2 - Part 2**
 Sacramental Servant: The Deacon and
 Contact with the Most Holy Eucharist
 Msgr. Eugene Morris

12:00 pm **Box Lunch** CC
 Honey Baked Ham

1:15 pm **Session 3 - Part 1** CC
 Being Eucharist To All: Covenant,
 Lament, Memory, Doxology and the Deacon



Deacon William T. Ditewig, Ph.D.

2:15 pm **Break/Snacks** GS

2:40 pm **Session 4 -Part 2**
RoundTable Discussion
 Deacon Bill Ditewig Moderator

4:30 pm **Evening Prayer** CC

5:30 pm **Dinner**
Select Local Favorites
 Buffet Style

7:00 pm **Social Time**

Wednesday, July 24, 2024

7:00 am **Breakfast On Your Own** AHR

8:15 am **Morning Prayer/Mass** HTC
 Fr. Joel Seipp

9:30 am **Session 1** CC
 The New Opportunities for Deacons
 In a Changing Church



Fr. Joel Seipp

10:30 am **Break/Snacks** GS

10:50 am **Session 2** CC
 Singer Songwriter and
 Recording Artist of
 Liturgical Music



Ms. Janet Sullivan Whitaker

12:00 pm **Box Lunch** Chick Fil-A CC

1:15 pm **Session 3** CC
 Illustrator/Author
 Cloud of Witnesses & Pain of Grace



Joni Seith

2:15 pm **Break/Snacks** GS

3:00 pm **NDICE BOARD MEETING.** TBA
Wives Meeting.
 Special Guest Speaker
 Joni Seith

4:30 pm **Evening Prayer** CC

5:45 pm **BANQUET** CC

7:15 pm **CONCERT**
 Janet Sullivan Whitaker

Thursday, July 25, 2024

7:00 am **Breakfast On Your Own** AHR

8:30 am **Morning Prayer** HTC

9:00 am **Final Session**

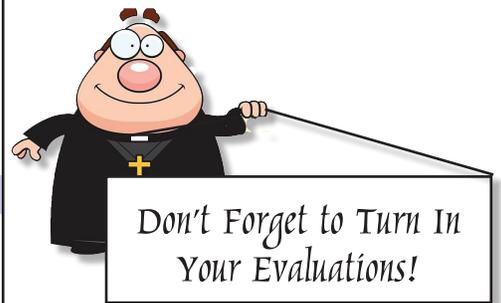


Bishop John Iffert
 Bishop of Covington, KY

10:30 am **CLOSING MASS** HTC

Bishop John Iffert
 Bishop of Covington, KY

Installation of 2024-2025 Officers



Safe Travels

LEGEND

HTC – Holy Trinity Church
 CC – Conference Center
 AHR – Area Hotels/Restaurants
 GS – Gathering Space

Continued from Page 1 – Pres. Corby

opening mass on Monday and Bishop John Iffert (Bishop of Covington Ky.) will celebrate the closing mass on Thursday July 25. It will be like a homecoming for us because Bishop Iffert is from the Belleville diocese. All of our speakers are confirmed and we have a special addition to the conference for the deacon's wives this year, stay tuned! We are delighted to announce that Deacon Bill Ditewig has accepted our invitation to speak at our 2024 conference. I look forward seeing some familiar faces from past conferences and hope to see and meet some new folks at our upcoming conference. Last but certainly not least, I would like announce that due to the extreme generosity of a deacon and his wife, who attended the 2023 conference being moved by the Holy Spirit, decided to make an unbelievable donation to NDICE in the sum of \$15,000 dollars. WOW! That's what I said when he called me and told me what he was going to do. If this generous deacon and his wife agree, you may be able to thank them personally at our 2024 conference. On behalf of the entire board, Thank You again.

"God is good" "All the Time"

Looking forward to another great conference in July!

Deacon Corby

Continued from Page 4 – Ditewig

We begin with Christ's command to "Do this in remembrance of me." Here we encounter a foundational theme in Judaism: the notion of "memory." How would those gathered at the Last Supper have understood those words?

Jesus' command is much more than a simple order to repeat what he has just done. Jesus is speaking from within the context of the Jewish understanding of memory, and that is a world of difference from mere nostalgia. More than 150 times in the Hebrew scriptures we find references to "remember." Of course, some of these are common usages of the term. Others, however, give us an insight to its deeper meaning. Often associated with references to the covenant, biblical remembering is not an abstract theory, but an activity leading to action. The Babylonian Talmud observes, "Remembering leads to doing."

Another dimension of remembering is that to remember makes something present again. Long before Greek philosophers began developing notions of a continued existence after death which would later be called

heaven, Jewish thinkers taught that when one remembered a person who had died, that person was really present to them again. In short, remembering connects the present with the past and the past with the present. What Christ is commanding his disciples is to make him and his kenotic self-sacrifice present again, and that is done by doing what He was doing as a way of "re-remembering." We often speak of the "real presence" of Christ at Mass, and in the West reference is usually made to the words of institution themselves. The more ancient Tradition stresses that it is the act of remembering itself -- which includes recalling the words and actions of Christ when instituting the Eucharist -- which effects the Eucharist in our assemblies.

With this brief background on "Do this in memory of me," we will conclude in the next article by looking at the deacon's role in the Eucharist. Specifically, we will examine the deacon as "a voice of lament and link to thanksgiving and justice." 

Happy Easter

