



Spring 2011

# Southwark Diaconal Newsletter

Vol.5 : No. 2

## Welcome to Southwark Diaconal News.

In this issue there are the promised appreciations of Deacons Keith Morris and John Sampson R.I.P., news of OGF events including the Renewal of Diaconal Commitment with Archbishop Peter on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May** and a report on the Annual Conference of Directors and Delegates for the Permanent Diaconate in England and Wales.

Many thanks to those who contributed – Deacons Alan Boxall, Thomas Kavanagh and Michael Kennedy. Many thanks also to Deacon Michael Dale who works so hard putting the script of these newsletters into publishable format and then circulating it. If you or someone you know is experiencing difficulty in receiving the Newsletter please contact him [michael.dale21@gmail.com](mailto:michael.dale21@gmail.com)  
John Greenwood – [WJohngreenwood@aol.com](mailto:WJohngreenwood@aol.com)

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## Annual Renewal of Diaconal Commitment

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Our Archbishop Peter wishes to continue the practice of an annual renewal of diaconal commitment for us and will be presiding at the afternoon Mass on our Diocesan Diaconal Day in May. The renewal of commitment will take place during the Mass as will conferral of the ministries of Reader and Acolyte on our students. PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THIS DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES.

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## On-going Formation (OGF)

Our On-Going Formation programme began this year at Rainham on 16<sup>th</sup> October somewhat problematically. Our speaker for the Day was to have been Fr John Hemer of Allen Hall but unfortunately his car broke down on the way. In his own words:

“It was on the south circular in Dulwich that I realised there was something wrong, the car was shaking alarmingly and seemed to lose traction, so I first made it back to Allen Hall. From there I phoned first the parish – Thomas of Canterbury and the parish deacon and then your home number but in each case got an answer machine. The problem was that two coils had gone and the AA man was able to replace them, but it was about 11.30 before he finished and there was no way I could make it to Rainham before about 1 O'clock.”

He added his hope that we managed “to do something constructive together.” So we were very grateful to Deacons Roger Evans and Stephen Newman for bringing us up to date on the re-establishment of the permanent diaconate in Ireland and leading some discussions thereon. Thanks, too, to Deacon Michael Dale for talking about the work of Life in which he is very much involved. And not least we thank Fr Brian Coyle, the parish priest of Rainham, for celebrating the midday Mass with and for us. In fact we had some wide-ranging discussions among ourselves which the ordained deacons there seemed to find helpful and convivial but which obviously were much less appropriate for students and aspirants. There were many lessons to be absorbed from Rainham for future planning of the OGF programme. Thank you to everyone there for being so understanding. Hopefully we can book Fr John Hemer for a future occasion!

Next comes our Day at Purley on March 5<sup>th</sup> with Fr Stephen Wang also from Allen Hall. We shall conclude at St George's Cathedral on 7<sup>th</sup> May with Fr Adrian Graffy.

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## Diocesan Diaconal Days this year:

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2011** – Purley. Fr Stephen Wang.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011** – Cathedral. Dr Adrian Graffy.

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## Funeral Homily for Deacon John Sampson

### R.I.P.

by Deacon Michael Kennedy



There is a famous hymn which begins “We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travellers on the road, we are here to help each other walk the mile and share the load.”

John was a man with a mission, a man with a gentle manner, with a concern for those less fortunate than himself, a good listener, a man on a journey, a pilgrim on the road. He was a pilgrim with one ultimate aim, to reach his Father’s House, and to share that faith, that hope and that joy of God’s Kingdom with those whom he encountered.

John’s earthly pilgrimage began in Anerley in 1952, baptised into the Church of England and brought up in that tradition. Then later on his journey took him to explore the catholic faith and to be received into full communion here in St Joseph’s in 1997, to live out the call as a catholic layman and to exercise ministries of Reader and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, before in 2003 he heard a different calling- the call of the Lord to follow him in a different way, and so began his formation for ordination as a permanent deacon. And that is where I first met him and Maureen and came to know them. John was part of the Southwark Seven - who very quickly became the Southwark Six, and then eventually became the Southwark Five. That journey took us to Wonersh, to days of formation at the seminary, to regular meetings with tutors, to essays, but also to spiritual and human formation, as we discerned and discovered what that calling to Diaconate meant for each of us.

John and Maureen played an important role in the formation of all the students, notably because through the agreement and kindness of Fr Peter, St Joseph’s Parish Bookshop became the Diaconal Bookshop, and on each formation day, John and Maureen would arrive at Wonersh, just in time usually, but armed with appropriate books and materials on the theme of the days lectures.

As part of that formation community another aspect of that pilgrimage began - those regular Sunday formation days, retreats and residential weekends, Diocesan Diaconal Days including the dreaded homily workshop, to the celebration of the Liturgy, some good, some not so good, but an experience of a community coming together, praying together, concerned for each other. And it’s true to say that Deacon James, Deacon Sean, Deacon Malcolm, Deacon John and I developed a special bond of friendship and support - and fittingly the five of us received ministries together, made our pre-ordination retreat together, and were ordained together at St George’s Cathedral on 10th June 2006. For all of us that day still holds wonderful memories in our lives, but for John and Maureen it was a day they had prayed for - and John threw himself into his new role with great enthusiasm and joy.

He often spoke to me when we would meet up about his ministry and one of the aspects he enjoyed most was celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism. He could engage with families preparing for the baptism of their children, he could share his faith journey, he could help and support and encourage them on their faith journey, and then joyfully he could celebrate that Sacrament of Baptism, and enable those who were baptised to be admitted into the Church, to become part of the family of God, and to receive that promise of eternal life which Jesus speaks today.

For John, his faith, his trust in God’s plan for him was something he lived out. He was a witness, he was through ordination a Herald of the Gospel, and his life was a life lived out with those Gospel values. And by his side for much over thirty years was Maureen, Maureen whom he loved so much, Maureen who supported him through his journey of faith, through his journey of discernment, through his Ministerial journey, and most recently through his journey of sickness and ill health, Maureen who supports him now - and whom he supports but in a different way.

John’s journey took him most recently to a different type of witness, to that of one united with the Lord in suffering. And yet he did not complain - instead he was so grateful for the prayers, for the support and for the love that was shown to him by so many people, but most notably by the support and the prayers of this his Parish family of St. Joseph. This is what he was most grateful for - he was not afraid - because John had that wonderful trust, a trust that the Lord would provide - that the Lord would never leave him, that the Lord would welcome him. John trusted in the Lord, and gave himself to the Lord. And the Lord did not let him down.

Another John once wrote about what he considered to be the Lord’s plans for him - I think it is worth sharing those words with you all this morning because in a sense they sum up perfectly what Deacon John Sampson was all about. That other John was John Henry Newman, and he said “ God has created me to give him some definite service, he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another, I have my mission, - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for his purpose.... I shall do good, I shall do his

work, I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place. Therefore I will trust him, if I am in sickness, my sickness will serve him, if I am in sorrow, my sorrow will serve him. He does nothing in vain, he may prolong my life, he may shorten it. He knows what he is about. O Lord, I trust you wholly, You are wiser than I, more loving to me than I am to myself. I am born to serve you, to be yours, to be your instrument. I ask not to see. I ask not to know, I ask simply to be used.”

We give thanks for the gift of John, as a son, a brother, a husband, a friend and colleague, a Deacon of God's Holy Church, we thank God for the way he has touched our lives in so many ways and entrust him into God's loving mercy. And our love for John reaches him still in the prayers and the Masses that we will say and offer for him. John will know our love.

## OBITUARY OF THE REVEREND DEACON KEITH VERNON FRANCIS MORRIS DIED 31ST JULY 2010 R.I.P.



By Deacon Alan Boxall.

Keith was born in Medway on Christmas Day 1924. He was evacuated to Pontypridd during the war and, on his return, he became an electrical apprentice in Chatham Dockyard. His family were Anglicans and taught him to pray and believe in God. As a child, he attended a Methodist Sunday School because it was close to home. He was always a regular worshipping Christian, seldom missing Evening prayer and Sunday worship within the Anglican tradition. A member of the Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary, many of whom belonged to the Anglo-Catholic part of the Church of England, this probably influenced him to reconsider his faith in future years. Being turned down when applying for Holy Orders was a bitter blow but he continued faithfully whilst questioning many aspects of the Anglican tradition.

Keith married Dorothy at St John's Church on 27th April 1946. They both went to Gibraltar in 1950 where he then finalised his reflection of faith and joined the Roman Catholic church with Dorothy, being baptised in the Cathedral. The Bishop of Gibraltar confirmed him that year.

He served in the Dockyard of Simon's Town in South Africa from 1954, and at the time of the hand-over from British rule. In 1958 he returned to Chatham Dockyard and set up home in Newington with a growing family of five - Doug, Stephanie, Clare, Estelle and Katie. His pastimes were photography and Jaguar cars. He also produced many things in his workshop, including the lectern and side altar of St Thomas's, Rainham. There are many other examples large and small to remind us of his presence with us. His dedicated service was to family and the Dockyard. At retirement in 1982 he was ordained as one of the first Permanent Deacons in our Diocese, and so became a trailblazer for the many that have since taken up this vocation. Appointed to work in the parish of Rainham in Kent, he ministered as a Prison Chaplain at Rochester where he visited Myra Hindley for some considerable time. During this period he also helped out at Walderslade parish.

He was a member of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission for many years during the early days of translation of the Latin to English texts. For many years he was a Defender of the Bond in the Marriage Tribunal Service also serving as Deanery Secretary at our local Clergy Deanery meetings.

His son Douglas, born 10th December 1951 in Gibraltar, was ordained into the priesthood on 4th July 1981. Sadly he died at St John's Seminary Womersley on 10th February 2004. This tragic event was something neither Dorothy nor Keith were able to recover from. Dorothy, after a long illness died on 19th May 2007.

Retiring from church ministry before the start of his illness when he was pronounced 'emeritus,' Keith was still very able to voice his opinions. He was always noted for a sense of humour second to none. He soon gave up officiating at funerals exclaiming that all of the deceased were younger than himself! During his recent illness, whilst on the way to the operating theatre for the amputation of his leg, he bravely sang 'Jake the peg'!! After a long time of rehabilitation eventually returning home, the best was made of everything, becoming very self-dependant. Many months passed before it was time to consider help of any kind as far as he was concerned.

Sadly the last days were not easy, but he always had the faith to smile and keep those who visited at ease, despite his obvious discomfort. Now with God, with Dorothy and Father Doug his eternal home has been reached. He leaves four daughters, 15 Grandchildren and 5 Great Grandchildren who will always remember him with great affection.

We too shall miss his, so dry, humour given each day for us. May he rest in peace.

## Retreats in 2010 - 2011:

**May 2011:** Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May: Diocesan Diaconal Retreat (deacons and wives) at Maison d'Accueil, Merville, France. Retreat Conductor, Fr Damian Cassidy, O.Carm.

**September 2011:** Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September (deacons only) at The Friars, Aylesford.

## The Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Southwark

### Director of Formation: Father Peter Edwards (and Chairman of the Inter-Diocesan Directors' Committee)

St Joseph's Presbytery, 1 Montem Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3QW  
Phone: 020 8942 2602 Email: [frpeter.newmalden@btinternet.com](mailto:frpeter.newmalden@btinternet.com)

### Assistant Director (Administration & Inter Diocesan Bursar): The Rev'd Tom Kavanagh

104 Grand Drive, Merton, London SW20 9DY. Phone: 020 8395 6389. Email: [Shirley.kavanagh@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Shirley.kavanagh@blueyonder.co.uk)

### Dean of Studies: Father Ashley Beck (also Chairman of the National Assembly of Directors & Assistant Directors)

20 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent BR3 2NP Phone: 020 8650 4117 Email: [ashleybeck88@hotmail.com](mailto:ashleybeck88@hotmail.com)

### Assistant Director (South London & Webmaster): The Rev'd Peter Rennie

46 Higher Drive, Purley, Surrey CR8 2HF. Phone: 020 8668 4016 Email: [deaconpeter@johnthebaptistpurley.org.uk](mailto:deaconpeter@johnthebaptistpurley.org.uk)

### Assistant Director (Kent) The Rev'd Michael Knight

46 Holmside, Gillingham, Kent ME7 4DR. Phone: 01634 574404. Email: [mick.knight@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mick.knight@blueyonder.co.uk)

### Director for On-Going Formation: The Rev'd John Greenwood

22 Alberta Street, London SE17 3SD Phone 020 7735 8787 Email: [WJohngreenwood@aol.com](mailto:WJohngreenwood@aol.com)

### Archbishop's Delegate for the Pastoral Care of Permanent Deacons: The Rev'd Kevin Dunne

22 Riddlesdale Avenue, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9AB Phone: 01892 6898000 Email: [kevinjeandunne@btopenworld.com](mailto:kevinjeandunne@btopenworld.com)

## Annual conference of Directors of the Permanent Diaconate and Deacon Delegates

Hinsley Hall, Leeds, 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010

Fr Ashley Beck is the Chairman of this Conference, and Fr Peter Edwards, Dcn John Greenwood and Dcn Tom Kavanagh representing Southwark attended.

The main item was a discussion on on-going formation. Dcn John gave a presentation which was well received by those attending. He structured his remarks into two parts - the importance of on-going formation and the arrangements in our diocese, including retreats, study days and support groups. It was clear from comments and questions that the situation is patchy around the country, varying from some good provision to very little. You can view an abridged text of John's talk on the diocesan website, PD pages.

Bishop Terence Drainey of Middlesbrough (who is the bishop responsible for diaconal liaison with the Bishop's Conference) celebrated Mass and gave some reflections on the role of the diaconate. He emphasised in particular that deacons are a support for the bishop and that the mission of service is important. So strong would be the commitment of deacons to the bishop, he considered, that service in a parish should be an extraordinary form of a deacon's ministry and not the norm. Bishop Terence spoke off-the-cuff so it is unfortunate that his supportive and thought-provoking comments cannot be read by all.

The other main issues covered at the Conference included:

- A letter sent by Fr Ashley to the General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference which, while commenting on the overall great success of the Pope's visit, nonetheless complained about the marginalisation of Permanent Deacons during the Beatification Mass.
- The National Directory of Diaconal Formation for England and Wales which has now been approved by both the Vatican and the Bishops' Conference and will take immediate effect. One significant change for us is that Candidacy will in future occur in the first year of study.
- A discussion about health problems suffered by deacons, particularly in the years immediately following ordination. A small group will consider what research might be done. The meeting recognised that priests also suffered problems.
- The International Diaconate Study Centre (funded by the German bishops) had some budgetary problems and a working party was considering internationalisation and regionalisation. The New Diaconal Review was in need of increased readership if it is to remain viable. An American complementary version is one option.
- The closure of Ushaw and the need for five dioceses to find alternative arrangements for diaconal formation.

Deacon Bernard Farrell-Roberts from The Maryvale Institute gave a presentation on their distance learning diaconal formation programme. In a wide-ranging and full period of 24 hours, other topics included spiritual direction for and by deacons; clerical dress; the authority of priests over deacons and the role of diaconal service agreements; the need to improve the quality of communications with and information supplied to wives; and the situations in Ireland and Salford.

## Please Pray for:

Our students in formation for the Permanent Diaconate: Michael Carrucan and Barry Mellish (first year), Alfred Banya, Christopher Richardson and Jim Coleman (second year), Mathew Manoharan and Jolyon Vickers (third year),

Our five aspirants for the Permanent Diaconate this year – Ian Black, Aidan McPartlan, Wayne Du Preez, Peter Sebastian and Wayne Tuckell.

Their wives and families.