

AUGUST MEETING

DEACON QUAN D. TRAN: “VOCATIONS: NOT ONLY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OR RELIGIOUS, BUT ALSO THE LAITY”

Deacon Quan D. Tran will share how he came to discern God’s call to the priesthood and his journey from attorney to clergy.

Moreover, he will speak about the vocation and mission of every lay faithful. Each one of us – whether priests, religious or laity – are personally called and sent to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Through baptism, we are all made one body in Christ, hence, sharers in his priestly, prophetic and kingly office. Lay faithful, in particular, are called by God to labor in his vast vineyard, which is the world, to contribute to its sanctification from within. Each layperson, therefore, is called by the Lord and receives a mission from him on behalf of the Church and of the world.

Deacon Tran was ordained to the transitional diaconate on July 10, 2010 for the Diocese of Orange. Prior to entering the seminary, however, Tran was a Deputy District Attorney for the County of Orange for nine years. Before that, he was a Deputy Public Defender for Kern County for two years.

Tran obtained his Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1994 and his bachelor in Business Administration from Baruch College in New York in 1991. Prior to transferring to Baruch College, Tran was at University of California at Irvine for two years.

In 2005, Tran felt a strong calling to the priesthood and in 2006, he joined the religious order of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary based in Boston. After one year, however, Tran discerned that he might not be called to the religious life but rather to the diocesan priesthood and returned to join to the Diocese of Orange. He entered St. Patrick’s Seminary in Menlo Park to study theology and then to the North American College in



Deacon Quan D. Tran, Diocese of Orange

Rome where he studied theology at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (also known as the Angelicum). Tran obtained his Bachelor in Sacred Theology in June of 2010 and is returning to Rome for two more years to pursue a Licentiate, a pontifical degree, in Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue.

He is expected to be ordained to the priesthood on June 11, 2011 in Orange.

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WHEN: Wednesday, August 18

TIME: 12:00 P.M.

WHERE: Jilo-Ryan Hunter &
Olsen Court Reporters
14661 Franklin, #150 (entrance
at rear of building) Tustin,
California

FOR DIRECTIONS:

www.jiloryan.com
(714) 424-9902

COST: \$15 donation for lunch
buffet

VOCATIONS

JOHN L. FLYNN, III

When I was 10 or 11, Father Bradley, the assistant pastor at my parish grammar school, St. Paul of the Cross Parish in La Mirada, asked how many of the boys in my class planned to become priests. The answer came in waves, not unlike an assault on a beach, the first wave of hands from the brave and the good, and a second (and perhaps a third) wave of hands raised by the mediocrities among us, myself included, who raised their hands only to avoid non-conformity, or being placed by Father Bradley on an enemies list. The result was impressive: a 100% vocation rate.

Later, at recess, a number of us conferred nervously about whether we had formed a contract of some kind. Should we notify our parents of our imminent departure for the seminary? To this day, I'm surprised that none of us panicked, or collapsed in tears. We collected ourselves, and concluded that we were not bound by having raised our hands. As a result, I am very confident

that my class of boys achieved for the priesthood a 100% rate of failure.

At heart, I had no intention of becoming a priest, but for that very short time (a half-recess), I gave myself up to the idea, like one who finally accepts death, and was strangely comforted by the possibility that we all would hang together. Brotherhood, I suppose, can make almost anything bearable.

So, I was not one of those extraordinary few who became priests, who have my deep admiration for the sacrifices they have made in service to the Church. I had no vocation after all, it seemed. But, of course, there really is no escape from the responsibilities of vocation. We all have vocations, or, more accurately, we all have the same vocation, to be the face of Christ to a wounded world. In many ways, the nature of our vocation is defined as



much negatively as it is affirmatively: There is no place for the beating of chests, the calling down of fire, bombast, derision, or vituperation. We must be all things to all, as clever as serpents and innocent as doves, however challenging that is to our own nature. Everything in us opposed to the love of God and the humility in which it is revealed must die, and that is a very painful death indeed. But if the world sees us instead of Christ, not a single heart will be moved. We are allowed, then, two weapons only: the love and humility of God himself. That, to steal a phrase from one much wiser than I, is the "soul of the apostolate."

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Q. How does one discern a call, a vocation, if you will, to the legal profession?

A. First off, the term “vocation” in the Catholic tradition has usually had a rather precise meaning of a call to the permanent profession one of the higher ideals given by the Lord and His apostles in Sacred Scripture, namely of voluntary poverty and celibacy and the apostolic life: “Come, follow me” the Savior says. To the rich young man he counsels renunciation of His property: “Go sell all you have and give it to the poor...” Or He says “There are some who are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”

And of this higher state—and the Scriptures as well as the Councils of Trent and Vatican II do define it as higher, as unpopular as such a notion may be today—Christ says “All men do not receive this teaching, but those to whom it is given...let he who can take it, take it.”

Today the term “vocation” is used much more widely to include almost any choice of state or profession considered under the aspect of discerning God’s will. Even so, it is good to use the word with the consciousness that when we use it, we refer to some higher, nobler choice. No one for example says: “I feel called by God to buy a magnum of Petrus” or “I have a vocation to own a Maserati” or “Honey, I discerned in prayer today that we should have marital relations once a day and twice on

Saturdays.” We are free to choose these good things, all things being equal, but we are not called to do so by Christ.

But we might say “I have been called to give up wine for Lent” or “I think God is calling me to simplify my life, and trade in the Maserati for a Corolla.” Or, “I think the Lord is asking us to abstain for a while to give ourselves time to be together and pray.”

So in discerning a call to the legal profession no one will discern it as vocation or calling who simply says: “I want to make a pile of money” or “I want social prestige and influence,” even though, all things being equal, money and reputation are obviously not wrong in themselves, in fact they are necessary up to a point.

Even so, a calling to lawyering should be understood in terms of its lofty, and defining aspects: “I want to possess prudence judgment,” “I want to serve justice,” “I want to facilitate the welfare of my community.” St Alphonsus Ligouri, the Doctor of the Church on whose feastday I am writing this, was one of the greatest jurists in the history of the Church, a master of both civil and canon law.

In his treatise on the duties of secular professions he offers the morally defining requirements for an attorney: “Four things are required in an attorney, namely, apt knowledge, a just cause, loyalty to his client, and a fair fee.” (Or the Latin original if you like: “Suppono

Q&A

HUGH BARBOUR, O. PRAEM



in advocato quatuor requiri, scilicet: scientiam convenientem, iustitiam causae, fidelitatem, et pretium iustum.”)

Thus we discern the loftier principles which indicate a vocation to the legal profession. Is God calling me to be learned, just, faithful, and honest in the service of my neighbor as a lawyer? If the answer is yes, then you have a vocation to enter the legal profession. If the answer is no, then you may become a lawyer, but you don’t have a lawyer’s vocation.

As you continue to work in the law, these four marks provide a perfect standard for examining your conscience to see if you are faithful to your calling or need to rediscover it: Do I study? Have I the courage to hold to truth? Do I respect my clients? Do I charge reasonably? If I do, I will join the glorious ranks of all the Catholic lawyers who answered the Savior’s call to learning and justice.

After a couple months hiatus, AV is back, trying always to stay on purpose, true to our vocation.

We at the STMS are all about confronting you in the legal community with that looming, life-changing thing we call Truth. Our American culture in 2010, including that small subset of dynamic, type-A, well-educated opinion leaders in the legal profession, is generally unhappy. Yes, the hussle and bussle, the bills, a bad economy, an often scary world, while the very concept of goodness, let alone Godliness, is under assault. These are enough to make even the strongest members of our society anxious.

How many of us are enslaved by our material expectations? By our work schedules? By the alcohol or drugs that help us cope with overwork? By pornography or other pathological self focus? Simply enslaved by the fear of failing to reach the

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

GREG WEILER

“American dream.” Too many I fear, even among our Catholic community.

Our mission at the STMS is to remind you that you were made for the joy and freedom derived from your true vocation, to be a Disciple of the living God, with an eternal destiny of happiness with God. Forget the shallow imitation vocations foisted on you by the media - nothing short of Everything must be our ideal. Let us band together in the STMS take Christ to our families and workplaces and pursue everything with zeal through the manifold avenues to Grace provided by the Church. St Thomas, pray for us. -GNW

St. Therese of Lisieux spoke for all of us when she said, "In the heart of the Church, I shall be love." To me, she ideally summed up our true vocation as Catholics. It is an appropriate mission for any Catholic in any profession—to be love. Although I sometimes felt at odds with St. Therese's sugary philosophy, I pondered this prayer a lot during my five years in religious life. At that time I believed that being a sister for me was the most honorable way to truly be love in the heart of the Church.

However, God thought differently, thank goodness, and showed me very clearly that I was creating a vocation out of what I thought was a duty, and not a calling from God. Shortly after leaving religious life, I met my husband Christopher and knew immediately that my time in religious life was not all for naught. It prepared me to be a better woman, a better wife and hopefully a better mother.

Naturally many people have wondered how and why I made the transition from religious life to law. To many, it seemed like there was such a disparity between the virtues and goals of the two professions. I would usually respond with the rosy-colored-glasses answer such as, "Well, I'm still serving people, but with a specific goal of advocating for them against injustice." But it was hard to believe this, especially since I was at a large law firm defending giant corporations. I found little fulfillment in this.

God knew better than I did. I was laid off a few months ago, and I would credit it to providence because, in retrospect it was the best thing that could have happened to me. I have since realized that my work demands at the firm were overshadowing my relationship with God, my spouse, my family, my friends. I now know that that path was not where I could personally fulfill my vocation as a Catholic—to be love—and certainly not, I felt, where my vocation as a lawyer would be sanctified.

CALLED TO LOVE IN THE LAW

BERNADETTE STAFFORD

As my vocation, or how I live that vocation out, has changed and morphed thus far, it continues to do so presently. I know with certainty God wants me to follow in St. Therese's footsteps as a Catholic lawyer, and I am discovering daily how I am to go about this. I just recently found out that my husband and I are expecting our first child and my mindset has already drastically changed. I feel as if I am starting to peer more and more into the window through which God will manifest his will further.

What I see already is that my desire to be love is nurtured through my relationship with God and begins in my home with my spouse and future child. It does not mean, as I had previously succumbed to, sacrificing all for the altar of success. Rather, it is to understand that being a lawyer must correctly fall into a divinely ordained hierarchy of values and roles. Within this hierarchy, I am still called to do my very best for my clients, but not to place them or my work at the top above God and my family. While putting this into practice may take awhile, I know that once my sweet child is born, he or she will tenderly lead me closer to responding to God's daily call to be love.

While still acknowledging that God calls some to sanctify the profession through leading as partners at top law firms, I am happy at the moment to embrace the call of a



Christopher and Bernadette Stafford

contract attorney working from home with the hours that best fit my family.

Deborah Knefel is pleased to announce her retirement as deputy city attorney of Anaheim and the opening of

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I was in the Army Reserves for 32 years and thought I would make general. I had all the right assignments and performance ratings necessary for this next step. Somehow I was not selected and had to retire from the Army.

Since the Reserves had occupied so much of my weekend time, I had never considered the diaconate as formation classes occurred during weekends over a five year period and I had been more of a Sunday and Holy Day Catholic. I had only recently made a commitment to myself to become holier and give God more of my time, which would be fairly easy since I basically fulfilled my minimum obligations as a Catholic. In reality, I had made the combination of working my way up the corporate ladder in marketing, the Army Reserves (taking on ever more challenging assignments), and raising a family of four children more important than my time with God.

When I left the reserves in December of 2001, I was 54 and a diaconate class was starting up in the fall. I had started going to daily Mass in the mornings at my Church and was getting more involved in religious activities. These were activities that I had neglected. I joined the Knights of Columbus probably due to my father's intercessory prayers coming home to roost as he had been a devoted 3rd and 4th degree knight.

As my relationship with Christ and His Church became stronger, I started looking for opportunities to make major changes in my commitment. One of the knights was nearing completion of a diaconate formation class and I began

quizzing him to find out more. He was encouraging and invited me to attend class with him, which I did.

I began discussing this with my wife, Lois, who was also very encouraging, especially since she was worried what I might do in retirement with my "extra" time since I had been so narrowly focused on work and the Army. I found out the requirements for the diaconate in the diocese of Charleston and was surprised that one was being ordained by 60, which meant that the class starting in the fall would be by my one and only shot at becoming a deacon. If I was a general and had waited, that door would have been closed to me. For the first time I understood why I had not been promoted.

The application process was rigorous and tested my commitment. It also required my wife's consent and participation in interviews. I made the commitment and embarked on a five-year journey, which included two Saturdays a month over five years, 32 courses (four per semester) and practicum work in liturgical functions. I progressed from applicant to aspirant to candidate (2-3 year journey) to lector to acolyte to permanent deacon (a transitional deacon is the last step before

WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES, ANOTHER OPENS

SERVING AS A DEACON

COLONEL BOB SMITH, U.S. ARMY (RET.)



Bishop Robert Baker congratulates Deacon Smith after his ordination on May 10, 2007. Deacon Smith serves Prince of Peace Parish in Taylors, South Carolina.

becoming a priest while deacon is the end step for permanent deacons). I now pray the liturgy of the hours and the rosary daily. On a weekly basis, I perform the novena to the Miraculous Medal and the novena to St. Monica with benediction. I preside over weddings outside the Mass, Baptisms, funerals outside the Mass (vigils and graveside services included), visit the sick, elderly, and dying. I even do homilies.

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is that I feel less stress and have time for everything. I am blessed to have seen the door open when another had closed.

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Monthly distribution includes the Catholic legal community of Orange County (**over 1,000 members**), select local parishes, and state and federal judges sitting in Orange County.

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

Send inquiries to
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SCOUTING AS A VOCATION

DON HUNSBERGER

When my wife and I moved to California in 1980 the third task I tackled was to sign up as a Scout leader. That was only slightly less important than landing a job or locating a place to live.

That telephone call to the local Boy Scouts of America council was years before my sons were born, let alone old enough to play Cub Scout games or attend summer camp. That decision was an integral part of the role I believed God had for my family.

When my sons' Scout time arrived, we looked for a troop with trained adults who understood the need to have Christ at the heart of their sons' program. The scouts had the advantage

of leaders with many years of training and experience, which gave all of them a richer time in Scouting. These adults created a faith-based Scouting experience that helped shape the lives of dozens of young men beyond my expectations.

The Scouts we work with rarely fail to earn their Eagle Scout and their Religious Awards, but we are more pleased that most of our Scouts complete the sacrament of Confirmation and go on to college.

While there are many immeasurable



aspects to the impact our adult leaders have on the Scouts, we are blessed that we can see the fruits of our labor in their success as young men of character and faith.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
August	Wed, Aug 18, 12:00 pm	Lunch Meeting featuring Deacon Quan D. Tran and his vocations to be a public defender, deputy district attorney, and now a priest. \$15 donation for lunch buffet.	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen Court Reporters, 14661 Franklin, #150 Tustin, California, (714) 424-9902
	Sun, Aug 22, 8:30 am	Catholic Worker, cooking and serving breakfast to homeless and needy families in Santa Ana.	Isaiah House, 316 South Cypress Ave, Santa Ana, CA 92701, (714) 835-6304
September	Wed, Sept 15, 12:00 pm	Lunch Meeting ft. Professor Kyndra Rotunda of Chapman University School of Law	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen (same as above)
	Sun, Sept 26, 8:30 am	Catholic Worker (same as above)	Isaiah House (same as above)
October	Wed, Oct 20, 12:00 pm	Lunch Meeting ft. the Hon. Donald F. Gaffney of the Superior Court in Orange County.	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen (same as above)
	Wed, Oct 24, 8:30 am	Catholic Worker (same as above)	Isaiah House (same as above)
November	Mon, Nov 8, 6:00 pm	Red Mass	Holy Family Cathedral, 566 S. Glassell Street Orange, CA 92835
	Wed, Nov 17, 12:00 pm	Lunch Meeting ft. Rev. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., PhD, former president of Gonzaga University.	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen (same as above)
	Sun, Nov 28, 8:30 am	Catholic Worker (same as above)	Isaiah House (same as above)