

# NADD NEWS

SPRING, 2006

## Constitution, Budget, Dues Votes Sought in Denver

### A Radical Revision of the NADD Constitution

Deacon Daniel L. Peterson, President

At my 2005 installation as President-Elect of NADD in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, I didn't have the slightest notion that one year later when I was sworn in as your president in New Orleans that I would be faced with the most critical constitutional challenge in the 30 year history of NADD.

Frankly, before my selection as President-Elect, I had not carefully read the NADD Constitution and Bylaws. I wish I had. But before my installation, I did read these documents in a careful and prayerful way.

I was startled by some of what I found.

1. **No encounter with Jesus.** The name of our Lord, Jesus Christ did not appear anywhere in these documents. Deacons are called to an authentic encounter with Our Lord Jesus, and deacon directors are called to help guide deacons on their journey with Christ crucified. How can deacon directors gather in a sacred vocational community that does not speak his name in its very constitution?
2. **No commitment of obedience to our bishops.** There was no mention of the sacred commitment of deacons to their bishops and the call of fidelity and respect of NADD deacon directors to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I believed then, and I believe now, that this was a profound omission of our founding

constitution and bylaws that cries out for resolution. I am convinced in my heart that every deacon who is called to service is first called to the will of the Father, union with his Church, and obedience to his bishop. In my view, the failure of our constitution and bylaws to proclaim this respect and fidelity is a serious flaw that demands a prompt remedy.

3. **Regional Representatives without authority.** Over the four years during which I served as a representative of Region XIII on the Board of Regional Representatives, I never had a single opportunity to vote on any issue be it inconsequential or significant. I was blessed with many friendships for which I am truly grateful, but it seemed to me then and now that the elected members of the Board of Regional Representatives are restricted to a "voice" that has no "vote." My reading of the existing Constitution and Bylaws reflects that the Regional Representative may "speak" but they may not "vote." This situation calls for correction.
4. **Operations vs. Governance: It does make a difference.** Another area that I found puzzling when I started was that the Executive Board was constitutionally allowed (and occasionally desired) to "run" the association. It seemed to me that our Executive Director and his/her staff are the people responsible for the day-to-day operations of the

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### Proxy Voting

If no voting member from your diocese will be present at the NADD convention in April, the NADD Constitution provides for a proxy voting procedure.

If you wish to exercise your vote by proxy, please return the enclosed form no later than April 7, 2006 to the NADD National Office.

We need time to process your request and notify the Nominations Committee to provide (at the convention) ballots to the person you have delegated as your proxy.

## From the President

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association and office and this should be articulated in our bylaws. The Board hires the Executive Director and should then entrust him/her with this responsibility. The Executive Board (and it really should be the combination of the Executive Board and the Board of Regional Representatives) should be responsible for governance of the association. The board should set the short and long-term goals and the direction for the association and the Executive Director should work collaboratively with them to make it happen. Even though some of us are officers and board members, we must realize that we are volunteers with little time to really make things happen. We each have our own diaconate offices to run as well as the time required to exercise our own personal diaconal ministries.

Given these realizations and the desire by at least one region to effect changes in these important areas, I agreed to continue a process that began in a prior year. I formed an Ad-Hoc committee to continue investigation into this matter of amending the Constitution and Bylaws. The committee consists of the following: Deacon Ray Duplechain – Region V as chair, Deacon Clarke Cochran – Region X, Deacon Bob McCoy – Region IX, and Sr. Jeremia Januschka – Region XIII.

With my blessings and the promise of my unbiased support, the committee embarked on their work by studying the findings of the previous committee. I shared with them my four observations above and asked them to consider these issues as well as any others that came before them which represented a consensus of the membership. I felt the membership of our association would be best served if the committee was totally independent, not aspiring solely to the wishes of the Executive Board, but actively seeking input from the entire membership through the Regional Representatives, a structure that is currently in place in our existing Constitution and Bylaws.

During this nine month process, Deacon Duplechain and his committee met on no less than three separate occasions via telephone conference and sought the input of the entire membership through the Board of Regional Representatives (September 2005 meeting in Denver and the subsequent period). Most of the Region

Representatives distributed to their regions the initial proposal provided subsequent to this September meeting and made recommendations back to the committee. During this period Deacon Duplechain also personally contacted me, several past presidents, the Executive Board through conference calls, and other members seeking their input. While not all NADD members were contacted, the committee and the Executive Board feel that all members were given ample opportunity to respond and what is proposed, while not including all recommendations submitted, includes and reflects the thoughtful input of the NADD membership.

Regarding the presentation of the amendments proposed to the Constitution and Bylaws, I would like to call your attention to the current NADD Constitution dated 5/30/95. Under Article VII – Amendments, it states:

A. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the full members of the Association present and voting at the meeting at which the amendment is under consideration.

B. To be placed before the membership for consideration a proposed amendment must be filed with the Executive Board by a full member at least three months prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be considered; and notice of the proposed amendment must be sent by the Executive Director to all members not less than one month prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be considered.

The current amendment proposal (as distributed) was submitted in writing by Deacon Ray Duplechain to the Executive Board in advance of our January meeting in compliance with paragraph B above. The proposal was discussed in detail at this meeting and the Executive Board requested by consensus that the submitted proposal be brought to the membership for an “up” or “down” vote at the annual membership meeting (Business Meeting #1) on April 20, 2006. The Executive Board further instructed Executive Director, Deacon Greg Urban to distribute the proposal to the membership as called for by paragraph B of the constitution. This was accomplished well in advance of the mandatory 30-day window called for by the constitution.

It is the Executive Board's and my desire that Deacon Duplechain's proposal (representing the unmodified recommendations of the Constitution and Bylaws

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## From the President

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Committee) be presented to NADD membership for a simple “up” or “down” vote at the upcoming meeting. If the vote is successful, I suggest that we wait several years to see how the amended constitution plays out in actual practice. We should then consider further changes or further clarifications to specific provisions, as necessary at that time. If the vote is not successful, it will be up to the next president, Deacon Anzalone, to decide whether or not

## From the Treasurer...

Deacon Math Prom

Thirty plus years ago, a group of diaconate directors met to discuss what could be done to serve the needs of deacon directors, deacons, deacon candidates and their families. Those who were able, at that first meeting, gave \$200 as seed money to get the organization started. From this gathering emerged the organization we now know as NADD.

We've come a long way since that time, both in numbers of members and in financial resources. Recently we have been taking a hard look at where we have been and where we are going as an organization. A committee has been studying our constitution and bylaws for over two years. One important item in this discussion has been the funding of the organization.

Some of you may recall the discussion that took place in Everett, WA in 1990. If my memory and the minutes of that meeting are correct, the question was, “Do we plan for a bare-bones budget with no plans for a reserve, or do we build-up a reserve and draw only on the interest?” Although no vote was recorded at that meeting, it seems a consensus was reached to establish a reserve equal to one year's operating budget. The Board has always tried to follow the wishes of the membership in this regard.

To do this had been relatively easy during the time of booming economy, as surplus funds were invested in the stock market. However, with the slowdown of the economy, and the financial difficulties many dioceses are experiencing, maintaining a reserve at that level has proved to be a real challenge. Using the “one year's budget model” for our reserve, we find as our budget needs increase, the amount in reserve must also increase. Another factor to consider: Any dues increase voted on by members doesn't take place until fifteen months after the vote. This is defined as a part of our bylaws to allow time for each diocese to plan their budgets.

And then there is the question that also needs thoughtful consideration. When does an increase in dues become a negative factor? At what point will members decide the

to assemble a new committee for this purpose.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee members, the Executive Board members, and I know well that this proposal is not perfect. We also know that this proposal will not please everyone who has provided valuable input. However, we feel it reflects what we believe to be an acceptable compromise and it makes great strides at broadening the governance of our association, something that is sorely needed at this juncture. I ask for your positive vote on this important proposal.

cost of membership is prohibitive? We are seeing a small decline in attendance at our conventions due to this lack of funding.

Perhaps an increase in publishing (and selling books) could be one way to increase revenues. One example is Monsignor Mehrkens' book, “Justice Theme Homilies, B Cycle.” If every director would encourage their deacons to buy this publication, it would be a win-win situation for the deacons, and NADD. The price is a reasonable \$15.00 plus shipping. The book is now on its second printing.

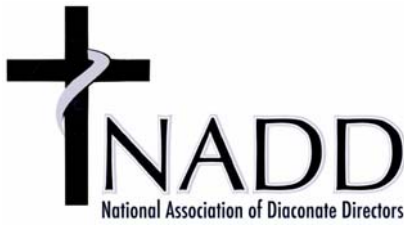
Cycle C will be out this fall, hopefully. Another suggestion to increase revenue might be to establish a memorial fund, a fund to honor someone's birthday or anniversary.

What about cutting expenses? One year we tried to do that by holding the convention on a college campus. That was met with many, many negative comments. The Finance Committee has gone over and over the budget and can not find any further areas to cut expenses without sacrificing services.

That said, we have put together a proposal for the '06-'07 budget which will be presented to the membership for a vote at the convention in Denver. This budget will recommend we further deplete the reserve funds we now hold for the '06-'07 fiscal year. However, in accord with members wishes to have a fully balanced budget and maintain a reserve equal to one-year's operating expense, we are also going to bring to the floor a proposal to increase membership dues for the '07-'08 fiscal year. Further depletion of our reserves is not our first choice, but as stated earlier, the bylaws indicate we can not increase the dues immediately. The dues increase, if approved by membership, will take effect on July 1, 2007. It is likely that another dues increase will be required and become effective in 2009. Details on this proposed increase will be available at the convention. All full members present will have an opportunity for input. We welcome constructive suggestions. A final note: Please pray that what is decided at the convention will bring unity and joy as we go forward to do God's will.

Toward's Shalom...





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**NADD CALENDAR**

4/19-22/06	Convention 2006	Hyatt Regency Tech Center Denver, CO
4/17/06	Exec. Board & Board of Reps Arrive	
4/18/06	Boards (Exec. & Region Reps) Meet	The Pontifical College Josephinum Columbus, OH
4/19/06	Pre-Convention Workshop & Directors' Insti- tute	
4/23/06	Departure	
6/1-3/06	Executive Board Meeting	The Pontifical College Josephinum Columbus, OH
6/4/06	Departure	
9/14/06	Executive Board Conv. Chair & Board of Reps Arrive	Orange, CA TBD
9/15-16/06	Boards (Exec. & Region Reps) Meet	
9/17/06	Departure	
1/11-14/07	Exec. Board Meet w/ 2007 Conv. Chair	TBD
1/14/07	Departure	
4/18-21/07	Convention 2007	Omni Hotel Los Angeles, CA
4/17/07	Exec. Board & Board of Reps Meet	
4/18/07	Pre-Convention Wkshp/Directors' Institute	
4/22/07	Departure	



**Update from the Secretariat for  
the Diaconate**

Deacon William T. Ditewig

As I write these words, I am waiting to be called into the Administrative Committee meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). By way of background, the Administrative Committee is composed of the senior episcopal leadership of the Conference, including the chairs of the various other Committees that make up the Conference, such as Doctrine, Priestly Life and Ministry, and, of course, Diaconate. The Administrative Committee meets to discuss immediate concerns of the entire Conference as well as to finalize the agenda for upcoming General Assemblies of the full body of bishops; in this case, they are getting ready for the June 2006 General Assembly which will meet in Los Angeles. Those of us on the senior staff are called in to support our Chairs and, as necessary, to address and update the Administrative Committee on issues affecting our responsibilities. Three of us attend the meeting as a group: Fr. Clete Kiley, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, who serves as the Executive Director of the Secretariat on Priestly Life and Ministry; Fr. Ed Burns, a priest from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, who serves as the Executive Director of the Secretariat on Seminaries and Priestly Vocations; and me.

In the case of the diaconate, the bishops are interested in the implementation of the National Directory on the Diaconate as well as other initiatives being undertaken throughout the diaconate in the US. During today's meeting, Bishop Campbell will brief the Committee on several initiatives, including the New Directors' Institute being created by NADD in partnership with the Diaconate Secretariat and the Pontifical College Josephinum. The bishops are extremely excited and impressed with the maturation of the diaconate over the last several decades and in the leadership being demonstrated by the NADD and others in that ongoing development. I simply thought that you would appreciate the fact that

your efforts are certainly being recognized and applauded by the body of bishops.

Speaking of the National Directory, the Spanish translation, long-delayed due to translation issues, will be released on or about 31 March 2006. As soon as it is available, I will be posting it electronically on the USCCB Diaconate web site ([www.usccb.org/deacon](http://www.usccb.org/deacon)). We are not going to release it in book form; however, it will be available in PDF format for downloading from the web site and in a CD-ROM version as well. I appreciate your patience on this. Unfortunately, the initial translation was simply not suitable.

Later this month I will be heading to the Vatican for meetings of the International Diaconate Center (IDC) and at the Holy See. This will include meetings with Cardinal Walter Kasper of the Council for Christian Unity and Cardinal Castrillon-Hoyos of the Congregation for Clergy. The IDC Board will also have an audience with Pope Benedict XVI. During the meetings we will be addressing the needs of the diaconate worldwide, and also developments here in the United States, including efforts to create a national research center on the diaconate at the Pontifical College Josephinum. This development has significance outside our own country because other nations look to us for assistance and guidance on diaconate formation, ministry and life, as well as insights regarding the theology, spirituality and development of the diaconate. A national research center, in other words, will have an international effect. I will keep you all posted on how this project develops. These meetings have a mutual benefit, of course, since it gives me a chance to gather information and insights about the diaconate around the world which can be of assistance to all of us as we search for creative solutions to our own challenges in implementing the diaconate in our dioceses.

That's about it for now. I look forward to seeing everyone in Denver!