

IN THE PARISH SPOTLIGHT

By Bernie Beglane

“There was always a seed, but God said wait.”

Chris Ervin wanted to become a priest, but as he recalled, God told him to wait.

“I married my wife, Patricia, and we have two children Jennifer (23), and Chris, Jr., (19),” continued Ervin, who was ordained a deacon last May.

“God still wanted me, but in a different way.”

It was while working as the business manager of our neighboring parish in Southamptton, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, that Chris elected to enroll at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, and begin studies for the diaconate.

“While at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, I renewed my friendship with Deacon John Moran,” continued Ervin, originally a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Massapequa Park, before moving into St. Rosalie’s 22 years ago.

“There were many discussions and prayer sessions. I have to say that Deacon John brought it all together. He was very influential in my decision to go into formation.”

As were the members of the Ervin family—all three of them.

“I could not have made such a commitment—there are five years of study—without my family’s support,” explained Chris.

“There were many times when I couldn’t be with them, so I owe each and every one a great deal.”

Almost from the day he entered the seminary, Ervin had a great desire to be a youth minister and expressed that to Monsignor William Gill, our pastor emeritus.

“On and off I had worked with Father Sabby who really laid the ground work with the youth of the parish,” stated Chris.

“The youth are the future of the Church.”

When Monsignor Dennis Regan was appointed pastor last summer, Ervin was appointed deacon, minister of hospitality and youth minister.

“It kinda happened,” explained Chris, who did not really know Father Dennis. “In the hospitality area, I am responsible for the church, the parish center and the community center.

“I make sure they run properly. Anything to do with all of them—fire alarms, heat,



Deacon Chris checks out his computer to see what is next on his schedule.



Deacon Chris Ervin, far right, the Director of Youth Ministry, has told the teenagers that he is available to them at any time.

grounds maintenance.”

Deacon Chris has expertise in those areas since he was a fire guard for Grumman Aircraft and dealt with crash rescue; an industrial fireman for Fairchild and a custodian in the Hampton Bays School District.

Ervin is now chaplain for both the Hampton Bays Fire Department and the Hampton Bays Volunteer Ambulance Corps, two organizations he has been affiliated with as a member for 20 years.

However, it is Youth Ministry around which he centers most of his time.

“The young people need someone they can trust and Father Sabby was that,” said Chris. “He has always had a great love for kids. As I said, I learned a great deal from him.

“It’s tough being a kid today. We are into faith sharing and scripture reading with them.

“As Catholic teenagers they shouldn’t follow the crowd. I tell them that I am available 24/7. They need to hear that and they know that they can reach me by e-mail any time.”

Ervin has 24 to 26 teenagers meet every Friday evening from 6:30-8:30 at the Parish Community Center.

“They get involved in community service,” he explained. “Food pantry...coat drive... Advent Giving Tree.

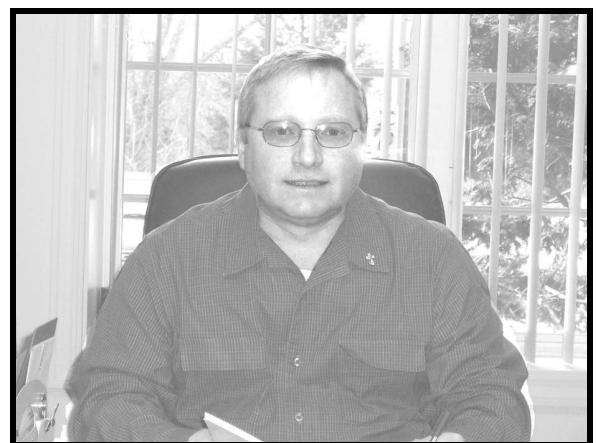
“The World Youth Day in Cologne is coming up. They have responded to every thing, even to feeling the illnesses and injuries older people are enduring. They talk from the heart.”

As an example, Deacon Chris mentioned that Jeffrey Ortega, a member of the Youth Ministry Program, suffered a serious leg injury in Maryland.

“The teenagers sent him care packages,” related Ervin, “and now he is back with us full of appreciation.

“Sometimes teenagers feel that religious education stops when they make confirmation.

“We, as adults, know differently. That’s why this ministry is so important. As I said, it’s tough being a teenager today, but our program can make it a whole lot easier.”



It is time for Deacon Chris to prepare his homily for Sunday Mass.