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SERVING DEACONS AND ALL SERVANT MINISTERS IN NORTH AMERICA

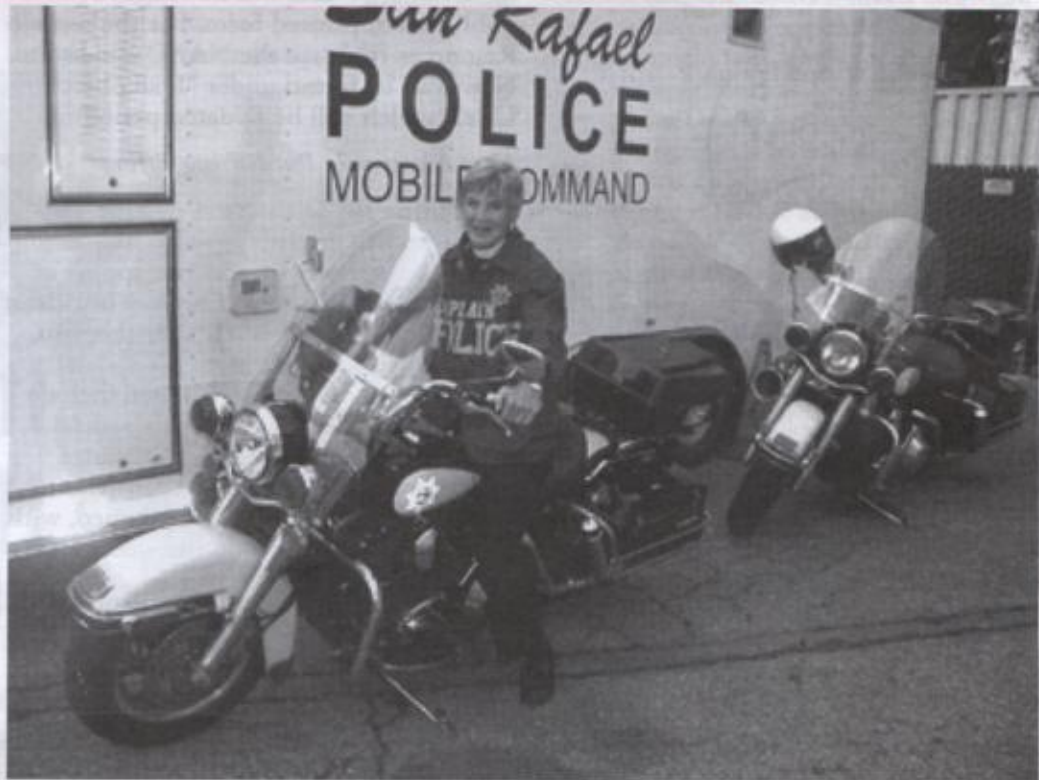


Hearing What's Not Being Said

By Sean McConnell, Editor,
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In the months following September 11, 2001, the Rev. Jan Heglund, then a deacon at the Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley, could no longer sit and watch what was happening in and around Ground Zero — she had to do something. After a conversation with her husband and a call to the Ven. Dorothy Jones, then archdeacon of the diocese, she volunteered as a chaplain at St. Paul's Chapel, and within a short time, her trip was arranged.

This trip came a little more than two years after Heglund and a group of emergency responders she worked with founded the West Coast Post-trauma Retreat (WCPR) program. WCPR was established to help those who have suffered from some traumatic incident or incidents. For one week



Dn. Jan Heglund goes to work

a month, Heglund and the staff of WCPR converge on St. Columba's Church and Retreat House, Inverness, where they meet with seven clients. These clients come from a variety of backgrounds: they are police officers, fire fighters, dispatchers, crime scene investigators, members of the military, paramedics, doctors, nurses, chaplains — anyone who might have experienced a critical incident or who works with those who have may attend.

"When they come we ask them to rank their incidents," Heglund told me, "and they always think they are there for the most recent one. But some of them have been on the job for more than twenty years and some of them have hundreds of incidents. Then, before they leave we ask them to rank their incidents again and they always get changed around."

People's lives are changed at WCPR. One client called and thanked Heglund. "When I got out of the car," the client told Heglund, "and my wife saw my face, she started to cry. She had not seen me that peaceful in years."

Heglund, who now serves as deacon at Christ Church, Sausalito, and as chaplain to

the San Rafael Police Department and the San Francisco Division of the FBI, thinks of her role as a "non-obtrusive presence." She is a listener, and she comes at this work naturally. On her first ride along with a young police officer in San Rafael, they drove along for some time in total silence.

"He was so young," Heglund said of the officer, "and I was looking at him and I said, 'I bet I know what you're thinking.'"

He said, "You do?" with eyes wide open.

Heglund responded, "Yeah I bet you're thinking, 'What is this woman doing in my car? And worse than that, am I going to have to talk about God in this small space?'"

"And he started to laugh so hard, and I said, 'All I want to tell you is that everything that is said in this car, stays in this car.'"

"And he said, 'Everything?'"

"I said, 'You got it.'"

"You know, he didn't stop talking that whole shift."

When asked why this is diaconal ministry, Heglund doesn't hesitate. "As a chaplain, I'm out there in the world. As a deacon, I bring that experience back into the church."

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One way that she connected the church to the world of first responders was to connect people in a retirement community to her police officers. The priest she was working with said to her, "Just because the residents at the Redwoods are old doesn't mean their life is over. I want you to stir them up. Get them to do something." After asking the chief's permission, Heglund sent an email around to the police officers she works with in San Rafael asking if they wanted someone to pray for them every day for a year. She then took the list to the faithful residents of the Redwoods Community for Seniors and asked them each to pray for one person every day. There was such a great response from those officers asking for prayers that she ran out of Redwoods residents and had to take her list to Our Saviour. Every day for a year, more than 60 officers and the people for whom the officers had asked prayers were prayed for.

Heglund performs all sorts of tasks as police and FBI chaplain. She makes hospital visits, she visits crime victims, she counsels officers, she attends briefings, and she listens.

"I really bank on God giving me intuition," Heglund says. Every day I pray, "Help me to hear what's not being said."

Simply being there has deepened the relationship between Heglund and the officers and agents she works with. "They are

very slow to trust anyone outside of their families, so in the beginning I just started being around — all the time. When you start being teased in briefing — I might add, unmercifully — you know you've got it made."

Confidence and a comfort with one's self are important qualities for a police chaplain. "We've had people in the program who are not so sure of themselves," says Captain Jeff Franzini with the SRPD. "Jan comes around with a smile, a warm face, and a confidence that defuses situations. Because of her varied experience, she's coming from a place that is more knowing and reassuring, and she brings all of her experience into play."

When Heglund arrived in New York after 9/11, Sister Grace, a nun who was coordinating the chaplains, apologized that there were only night shifts left. Heglund told her that she had come to fill in wherever she was needed and that the night shift would be fine. Heglund bivouacked at the YMCA and spent her chaplain time at St. Paul's Chapel — the little church on the edge of the destruction that became a refuge for responders and relief workers.

Heglund was told by some of the chaplains at St. Paul's to pay extra attention to one man, a backhoe operator who was obviously not coping well.

"So I watched this guy for a while," Heglund said, "then walked up to him and asked how he was doing."

"And he said to me, 'This is the worst day of my life.'

"And I said, 'What makes it "the worst" in this scenario?'

"And he said, 'I've never uncovered so many heads in my life.'"

This man was just one of many that Heglund would listen to during her three-week stay at Ground Zero.

Because of her presence to those who are on the front lines of emergency response, and because of her work with WCPR, Heglund was recently named "Woman of the Year" by the Marin County Chapter of Soroptomists International.

"I'm reminded of the saying," Heglund tells me, "It's great when boats are in a harbor, safe. But that's not what boats are made for." That is the life of a deacon for Heglund, to do the work that a deacon is called to do. It is a life on the boundaries. She is a part of the family that is the SRPD, and of another family that is the FBI, but she's not an officer or an agent. Then there is the liminal role of the deacon leading the church into the world and holding up the world to the church. We don't always want to see the world that Heglund sees. It is a world where crime and violence and pain and loss seem incessant. And in that world is one quiet and confident deacon, listening for what is not being said.

An Ordination Sermon

A sermon preached on the occasion of the ordination of Barbara Russell as deacon, Friday, November 30th, 2007 (St. Andrew's Day), St. John's Anglican Church, Port Hope, Ontario, by The Reverend David Harrison, Incumbent, St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Brooklyn, Ontario

Thomas "Tip" O'Neill — who was a long-time Speaker of the American House of Representatives and a fixture of Boston politics for over forty years — once declared that "All Politics is Local". By this he meant that it was the problems and concerns of real people — "on the ground" — in towns and villages and cities, which *really* affected how politicians — in his case in Washington, D.C. — thought, acted, responded, voted. "All politics is local". This phrase has become famous — as a kind of short-hand that reminds those engaged in political life — as well as those who observe it — that it is locally — with the voters — where the political "rubber hits the road."

With apologies to the late Speaker of the American House of Representatives, I would

like to borrow this idea — and adapt it — for tonight's occasion when we gather for the ordination of a new deacon in Christ's Church — by suggesting that "All Ministry is Local".

Oh sure, as Anglicans we've got lots of structures and committees and processes and personnel which aren't local. There's the Trent-Durham Bishop's Office in Whitby, there's 135 — the Diocesan Offices in Toronto, there's the offices of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario in Sault Ste. Marie, there's the offices of the Anglican Church of Canada on Hayden Street in Toronto, there's the Anglican Consultative Council operating out of Lambeth Palace in the U.K.

But still — it is here — and in every parish — that the rubber of ministry hits the road of humanity. Our bishop here today — let's not mistake him as being "from away" — he's local, too. This is *his parish*. But because even bishops cannot be in fifty or sixty places at one time, Fr. Stephen and the people of St. John's, Port Hope get to look after this place — and (more to the point) the *ministry* in which this parish is engaged, on the bishop's behalf. "All Ministry is Local."

Tonight, in response to God's call, the Church here — locally, in this place — is gathering for the ordination of a deacon. The Church is gathering to witness, to affirm, to support and to celebrate the calling of Barbara Russell to be a deacon. And this *is* a wonderfully local thing to do, because the ministry of a deacon — the "bread and butter" of a deacon's calling — is right here — in this parish church — but not *just* in this parish church — also in this Municipality of Port Hope. Even more than a bishop who — of necessity and calling — takes his or her place in the wider context and counsels of the Church.

Even more than a priest — who is called by the wider Church to ordained ministry and whose life it is to move, from time to time — to bring his or her particular gifts to different parishes. Even more than bishops and priests among those ordained for ministry, a deacon holds up the local-ness of Christian love and service.

It is from within the life of this parish — you, the people of St. John's, — that Barbara's gifts have been detected, discerned, and raised up. And the ministry which will be hers will find

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