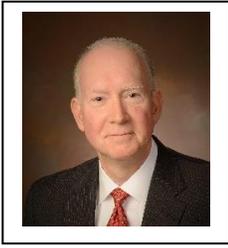


Are You Our Next Deacon?



God blesses us with what we need, when we need it. So, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit has inspired a new class of 11 prospective deacons – including one of our own parishioners!

Dan O'Toole just completed three years of diaconate formation and will enter his final year this September. Dan and his wife, Anne, have been members of St. Peter's since 2016. Many of you will recognize Anne as a lector at the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass and we hear Dan's voice in the tenor section of the choir at the same Mass. Others of you will know both Anne and Dan from the other ministries in which they participate.

A vocation to the permanent diaconate often comes to married men, most of whom have a family and full-time jobs. It just so happens that Dan's discernment began in earnest after he retired from the Navy. But, let's let him describe his journey in his own words:

I have always heard a quiet voice urging me to service in the Church, but when I was younger, there was no permanent diaconate, and I felt called to be a husband and father. Yet, the Church, and the Holy Eucharist in particular, were always near and dear to me even as I began a busy career and started a family. Like many, my time was consumed with all of this; but as I attended Mass, the urging continued quietly. It became louder when Anne and I retired and participated in the St. Ignatius Loyola Spiritual Exercises at St. Peter's under the direction of Father Jim Rafferty. Through this life-changing experience, I came to perceive a possible call to the permanent diaconate.

Ultimately, I was accepted into the formation program. In the first year, called "Aspirancy," my classmates and I were joined by our wives for an interesting blend of instruction – Old and New Testament – and the sharing of pastoral experiences by several "guest" deacons. The next three years of formation included two courses each semester, including Theology and Ecclesiology, among others. All four years include retreats and other formation activities, some also with our spouses. As I prepare for my final year, I am gaining pastoral experience through internships at St. Peter's, with a view towards ordination in the Fall of 2023, if that is God's will for me. It has been a remarkable journey.

You will begin to see Dan assisting in a variety of ways, including at Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and on the altar at Mass. As you see him assisting, perhaps you might consider whether you have heard a quiet voice urging *you* towards deeper service to Christ and his Church. For more information on the permanent diaconate, please visit the Archdiocese website at

<https://www.bostoncatholic.org/permanent-diaconate>.

Are YOU our next deacon?