

'The diaconate needs more Indians'

Roy Callison

Parish: St. John the Evangelist, Cookson
City of residence: Park Hill
Age at ordination: 52
Wife: Susan
Years married: 16
Children: 4

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

Deacon Joseph Faulds

What did he or she say?

He said that he thought I would make a good deacon. He was glad that I am an Indian since the diaconate needs more Indians.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

No, but it required a lot of prayer.

What was the best part of the formation program?

The great theological education I received. A good education in theology is necessary in order to help those in need. A good theological base makes it easier to explain things to someone who is seeking answers to difficult questions.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part of the formation program?

I think the time required to complete the written assignments and the reading assignments. When a person works full time, finding time to accomplish assignments can be difficult.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Study of Sacred Scripture. The Bible is so alive with knowledge. It keeps giving on a continuous basis.

Describe your comprehensive project:

I was working with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees to re-inter the remains of some Cherokees who were unearthed in Kentucky in the Daniel Boone National Forest. Since they were on U.S. government land, it required the involvement of the Native American Graves Protection Repatriation Act Committee, which increased the time of re-interment substantially. I created the re-interment ceremony, which incorporated both Catholic and Cherokee ceremonies. This was done since no one was able to determine if the



'Giving up of self is hard'

Glenn Collum

Parish: Sts. Peter and Paul, Cushing
City of residence: Stillwater
Age at ordination: 54
Wife: Laura
Years married: 34
Children: 2

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

Deacon Dick Berberet mainly, but other parishioners at St. John in Stillwater had an influence on me.

What did he or she say?

At moments when my discernment for the diaconate seemed more at peace was when they asked if I had ever thought about becoming a deacon. Especially, when my conversion was visible to others.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

Not really; I was willing, and Laura was willing as well. I had the support of my family, and the timing seemed right in my life.

What was the best part of the formation program?

Experiencing a deeper prayer life. I enjoy praying the Liturgy of the Hours, where I experience solitude in prayer. It helped me during times of difficulty in discernment.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part?

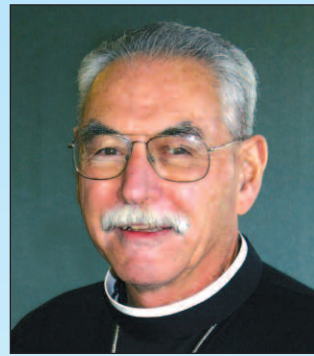
Balancing time between family, job and parish life. Because giving up of self is hard and requires perseverance in giving up time for God's time.

What branch of theology did you like best?

Sacramental theology, because I experienced unity within the Sacrament of Christ and the Church. Scripture and Liturgy became easier to understand by studying and living the sacraments.

Describe your comprehensive project:

It was a very humbling experience. I engaged in a faith outreach project to the rural parish of St. John in Pawnee. I was involved in the parish and reaching out to their needs by building a handicapped ramp. This helped several parishioners who needed assistance entering the church. Most of all, I was accepted



'Call me Mr. Fix It'

Tom Gorman

Parish: Holy Family
City of residence: Tulsa
Age at ordination: 64
Wife: Helga
Years married: 43
Children: 2

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

It had been on my mind for years, and I had been praying for direction when Deacon Millard Kizzia asked me if I had ever thought about becoming a deacon. He invited me to the class to see if it was my calling. Millard did not know I had been praying about this, and when he asked I felt it was the Holy Spirit working through him telling me, "OK, you prayed about it, now do something about it." It's not what we do, it's how and why we do what we do for the love of God.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

I wondered if I would be able to handle the academics. It had been 40 years since I was in school.

What was the best part of the formation program?

To watch the Holy Spirit work in all parts of our lives. You would see the men who knew they were called.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part of the formation program?

Finding the time to devote to the studies and balance family life.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Sacramental theology. Because of my lack of or limited catechesis, my understanding and knowledge is growing and continues.

Describe your comprehensive project:

Teach Dei Verbum – how it reaches all the people. Road map to salvation!

What are your thoughts as ordination draws near?

Scared. I am here to do God's will. I hope I never fail him.

If a friend told you he was thinking of becoming a deacon, what would you tell him?



'The finest men I have ever come to know'

José D. Guzman

Parish: St. Bernard
City of residence: Tulsa
Age at ordination: 48
Wife: Karen
Years married: 25
Children: 9

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

Deacon Richard Campbell

What did he or she say?

He asked me if I had ever considered ordination as a deacon. He thought I would make a good deacon.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

Yes. First, there was my family and the sacrifices they, especially my wife, Karen, would have to make because of my frequent absence from family life and the possibility of having to move parishes. Second was discerning God's call to the diaconate and the frequent uncertainty of His will for me. Finally, the call to celibacy in the event of Karen's death was very difficult.

What was the best part of the formation program?

The formation program strives to offer a well-rounded exposure to those areas most critical to serving as deacon: academic, spiritual, pastoral and human. For me, the best part was the academics. For years I have studied Church teaching on my own, but the level of theology presented was wonderful, unpacking many of the Church's dogmas and doctrines.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part?

For me, the most difficult was the pastoral part. As a deacon, I would be called to love the unlovable. There is nothing you can do to prepare for this encounter other than pray and surrender to the Christ in the sick, suffering, dying and poor. I am still working on loving as Christ does.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Sacramental Theology, because we are a sacramental Church encountering Christ in the sacraments and in the most profound



'I don't think God has told me 'no''

John M. Johnson

Parish: Christ the King
City of residence: Tulsa
Age at ordination: 51
Wife: Margaret (Wade)
Years married: 25
Children: 1

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

My cousin, Father Frank Gold

What did he or she say?

"Have you ever considered the diaconate?"

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

The difficulty was discernment of the calling – was the diaconate really what God was calling me to? I have struggled with that throughout the process – is this God's will?

What was the best part of the formation program?

The brotherhood established among a fine group of Catholic men would rank at the top of the list. Other significant elements were the growth in my spirituality, a fuller understanding of God's Word and deeper knowledge of the Church. I am truly blessed to be a part of this program.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part?

The time commitment. There are so many things that our baptism calls us to do and so many needs in the Church that I felt I should be doing, but intellectually, I know that by the process of the formation and the knowledge gained through the studies, I am in a much better position to serve God's people.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Moral theology. So much of what I learned in moral theology could be applied to the secular world in which we each must live.

Describe your comprehensive project:

Preparing and teaching a course in Diocesan Policies and Procedures and Parish Infrastructure. The course begins with the parts of Canon Law that dictate how dioceses function, their leaders and regulatory bodies, then goes into specific policies and procedures of the diocese, the safe environment program, funding. The parish model follows a similar



'The diaconate cannot be a part-time effort'

Kenneth Longbrake

Parish: Sts. Peter & Paul, Cushing
City of residence: Cushing
Age at ordination: 59
Wife: Mary Elizabeth
Years married: 42
Children: 3

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

Father Mike Cashen

What did he or she say?

"The Diocese is beginning to have information sessions to inform men of the newly approved diaconate formation, and I think you should go and see if this is something you may have a calling to do."

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

I had a very strong fear that I might be entering the program for the wrong reasons. It may be something I was doing for me personally and not a vocation from God. Entering was not the difficulty; the discernment was the difficulty.

What was the best part of the formation program?

The personal growth and knowledge of God's love. Although the academic requirements at times seemed overwhelming it truly became aware to me that the more I came to know the teachings of God's Church the more I came to know God's love.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part?

All the changes within the program after we began. The changes I feel have all been for the betterment of the program, the diocese and the entire Church, but there has been a certain amount of disagreement with the changes which has caused alienation and lack of acceptance from some.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Scriptural theology, as everything we teach, each action we perform and every duty we fill must be based on God's love given to us through His inspired Word.

Describe your comprehensive project:

I designed and implemented a study program for men in prison which takes the



'Realizing my mother's dream for me'

Carlos Leon Moreno

Parish: St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Collinsville
City of residence: Tulsa
Age at ordination: 59
Wife: Yamile
Years married: Eight
Children: 3
Grandchildren: 4

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

Msgr. Patrick Brankin was the instrument of God in making me consider His call to serve the Church in this ministry.

What did he or she say?

Working in the Office of the Hispanic Apostolate as its director, Msgr. Brankin explained the program to me, since I was already a lay missionary in the service of the Hispanic Catholics of the diocese. My first reaction was one of wonder: "What is a deacon?" and "Could I possibly be a deacon?" I presented these questions to Monsignor, and he answered me.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

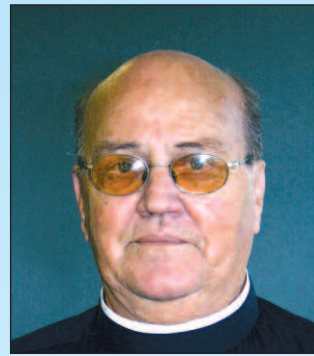
The first difficulty that presented itself had to do with my language skills. My understanding of English was (and continues to be) very lacking; but with the help of the Lord and the collaboration of the professors and my brother candidates, I was able to overcome the difficulty of hearing and reading in English and having to think and reflect in Spanish.

What was the best part?

The best part of the formation program was that God gave me the gift of being able to put my life or offer my life in service to the Gospel as an ordained minister. Because the reception of the seven sacraments is reserved by God for those who need them for salvation, and by the grace of God, I am now the minister of these sacraments.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part of the formation program?

My greatest frustration had to do with the language, because during the whole time of our formation, I wanted to share my ideas and concerns with my brother candidates,



'A sense of wonder'

Jim Ruyle

Parish: Holy Cross
City of residence: Wagoner
Age at ordination: 65
Wife: Sherry
Years married: 40
Children: 2

Who first got you thinking of the diaconate?

The late Father Steven McCauley

What did he or she say?

He told me that he could tell I cared about the Church and God's children within the community.

Was there anything difficult in your decision to enter the formation program?

Not really; after some extensive praying, the decision became easy. There was some apprehension about the academic part of the program at first.

What was the best part of the formation program?

The spiritual formation. The closeness of the group within a short period of time. Why these men became my spiritual guides. I can see their faces when they pray for strength.

What was the most difficult/frustrating part?

Seeing the ones who dropped out over time leave the group. Why? Because we were brothers, and with each of them a small part of the rest left.

Which branch of theology did you like best?

Sacramental Theology. Because of the intensity of the subject and the history of the Church's theological beginnings. Seeing that the essence of the sacraments has not changed but is still live and vibrant within the Church today.

Describe your comprehensive project:

A six-week course of instruction to members of Holy Cross Parish on "Why the Mass Matters." A comprehensive look at the parts of the Mass and what they mean or should mean to us. This instruction was taken from various sources and covered each prayer, gesture, symbol, etc., that is used in the liturgy of the Mass, as well as a historical overview of the early beginnings of the Mass.