

A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

At the Mass when I was ordained a Temporary Deacon the ordaining bishop wore multiple layers of vestments indicating the importance of both the priestly and diaconate Holy Orders. This was a real sacrifice for the bishop as all those vestments were heavy and hot; especially when standing under the lights in the sanctuary. First, the bishop wore the *dalmatic* which is the formal vestment that indicates a deacon serving at the altar during the Mass. The *dalmatic* can be recognized from the priestly vestment by its sleeves. Next, over the *dalmatic* the bishop wore a *chasuble* which is the sleeveless vestment worn by priests when serving in the sanctuary. The bishop explained to me and to the other men about to be ordained deacons before the Ordination Mass that he had done this to better symbolize the necessity of both the diaconate and priesthood within the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The Twelve Apostles were both the first priests and bishops of the Church. Very quickly however (as described in the Acts of the Apostles) it was perceived that the Apostles needed assistance in managing the practical affairs of the Church. Thus, seven men were chosen to become the first deacons of the Church. These men were picked based on their ability and their commitment to Jesus Christ. Although, their first mission was to assist the Apostles in distributing assistance to the poor, their Christian faith soon led them to proclaim the Gospel to others. It is noteworthy that St. Stephen, the very first Christian martyr, was one of these first deacons.

The deacons of the Catholic Church today continue this ministry. There are two groups of deacons in the Church. Temporary deacons are men preparing to become priests who receive ordination as deacons prior to being ordained to the priesthood. The second group of deacons are Permanent Deacons who are men (usually married) called to serve the Church in much the same manner as the very first deacons. They often serve the Church as a whole and their own parish in managing the practical affairs of the parish (I've served at two parishes where the parish Business Manager was a Permanent Deacon) and assisting in spiritual ministries in the parish such as sacramental preparation.

Here at St. Anne Parish we are fortunate to have four men serving as Permanent Deacons: David Brockman, James Perry, Duane Wozek, and Gary Wooley. They serve in a variety of important ministries in the parish as well as assisting at the altar during Masses. It just so happens that all four men either just celebrated or will be celebrating the anniversary of their ordinations in the coming weeks. I hope that you will congratulate them on their anniversary of their ordination and thank them for their service to the Church and to St. Anne Parish.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff
Pastor