

ONE OF THE CURRENT MYSTERIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS TO DO WITH THE ROLE OF THE DEACON.

UNLESS A PARISH HAS ONE OR TWO SERVING,

MOST PEOPLE REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT A DEACON DOES OR WHAT HIS POSITION IS IN THE CHURCH.

IN TERMS OF HISTORY THE ROLE HAS ONLY BEEN REDISCOVERED IN THE PAST COUPLE OF DECADES.

SO, A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THAT.

FIRST OF ALL, THE NATURE OF THE DIACONATE IS SERVICE.

SERVICE TO THE POOR AND NEEDY AND SERVICE IN MANY OTHER WAYS IN THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH.

IT IS AN ORDAINED POSITION.

ORDINATION COMES FROM THE BISHOP.

IN OUR DIOCESE MEN, AT LEAST AT THE AGE OF 35 ARE ORDAINED AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF PREPARATION AND SEVERAL YEARS AS A LAY MINISTER IN DIFFERENT CAPACITIES.

A DEACON CAN BE MARRIED AND WITH A FAMILY.

IF A WIFE DIES, HE MAY NOT REMARRY.

MOST PEOPLE SEE HIS SERVICE IN A LITURGICAL SENSE.

A DEACON OFTEN ASSISTS AT MASS ON WEEKENDS AND CAN TAKE ON OTHER ROLES.

ITS CALLED,, 'HATCH, MATCH AND DISPATCH.'

HE CAN PERFORM BAPTISMS, HE CAN WITNESS MARRIAGES AS WELL AS TAKE PART IN FUNERALS.

THIS USUALLY HAPPENS WHEN A PRIEST IS NOT PRESENT AND THERE IS NO MASS INVOLVED.

HIS VOWS, OR PROMISES ARE PERMANENT.

IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH THERE IS THE DEACON, FOLLOWED BY THE PRIEST AND FOLLOWED BY THE BISHOP.

SEMINARIANS STUDYING FOR THE PRIESTHOOD OF SPEND AT LEAST A YEAR IN WHAT IS CALLED THE TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE BEFORE ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD.

IN THIS DIOCESE WE HAVE MANY MEN WHO HAVE STEPPED FORWARD AND MADE THE COMMITMENT TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE.

NO, THIS IS NOT A VOCATIONS TALK.

PROBABLY SOMEWHERE IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS A DEACON WILL BE ASSIGNED TO ST. KATERI.

IT WILL BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR THIS PARISH AND THERE MAY BE A NEED TO TAKE TIME TO ADJUST SINCE FOR THIS PARISH IT IS SOMETHING BRAND NEW.

I FEEL I CAN'T SAY THE NAME OF THE PERSON JUST YET.

HE IS ALREADY SERVING IN MINISTRY IN ANOTHER PARISH BUT THE BISHOP HAS YET TO SIGN A FORMAL ASSIGNMENT LETTER.

ALSO, I WOULD NOT ANNOUNCE IT NOW BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE A PROBLEM WITH THE OTHER PARISH FINDING OUT THROUGH RUMORS.

IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THAT PASTOR AND DEACON TO MAKE THEIR OWN ANNOUNCEMENT FIRST.

THAT IS HOW IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE DONE IN PRIESTLY ASSIGNMENTS EVEN THOUGH MANY CHOOSE TO AVOID THE CUSTOM.

IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS I ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE DEACON WHO WILL BE SERVING HERE, AND PRAYING FOR THIS PARISH AS IT MAKES AN ADJUSTMENT TO SOMETHING NEW.

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE I WILL KEEP THIS PARISH INFORMED AS IT GOES ALONG.

IT COULD HAPPEN IN A WEEK OR SEVERAL WEEKS.

LET ME JUST END BY SAYING THAT THE ROLE OF THE DEACON WILL NOT TAKE OVER THE ROLE OF MINISTRIES THAT OTHERS ARE ALREADY DOING.

IF ANYTHING, THE DEACON WOULD ASSIST AND FIND HIS NICHE WHERE HIS TALENTS CAN BE USED TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL.