

Deacon Drake McCalister was scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood this Friday, June 21, at Holy Family Church in Steubenville. Deacon McCalister is, as you know, a convert to the Catholic Church, having previously been a minister in the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. In specific situations, the Catholic Church, with a dispensation from clerical celibacy given by the Holy Father, ordains to the priesthood married men who were ministers in other Christian communities before their reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

In 2017, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Holy See, in response to the request from Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, gave its permission for Drake McCalister to be in formation for ordination to the priesthood. Deacon McCalister was in formation with several priests of the Diocese of Steubenville and was ordained a transitional deacon by Bishop Monforton on June 29, 2018.

In order for him to be ordained to the priesthood, Pope Francis must first grant a dispensation from clerical celibacy. It has been discovered that in the spring of 2018, however, the Diocese of Steubenville failed to submit the final materials requesting this dispensation to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. **As a result, Deacon McCalister's ordination to the priesthood must be delayed until the Holy Father grants the dispensation.** Bishop Monforton already has been in conversation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the Congregation has indicated to Bishop Monforton that it will make the effort to expedite this final phase of the required process. The required materials have already been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the Diocese is very hopeful for an expedited response from the Holy See. Once the Holy Father grants the dispensation, **Deacon McCalister's priesthood ordination will be scheduled for the earliest possible date.**

Bishop Monforton and the Diocese of Steubenville offer sincerest apologies and deepest regrets for this error on the part of the Diocese to Deacon McCalister, the McCalister family, their friends, the faithful of Holy Family Parish, and all the people of the Diocese of Steubenville. Deacon McCalister has done everything he was asked to do in his formation, and this mistake is entirely the fault of the chancery. We look forward to announcing a new ordination date as soon as possible.