

Call, Formation, and Life as a Deacon

Deacon Bob Wojcik

Our lives are a journey, including a spiritual journey. To make a long story short, I was born in Argentina, arrived in Canada at the age of five, along with my parents and my brother, and grew up in the Polish-Canadian parish of St. Casimir on Roncesvalles Avenue in Toronto. I graduated from Ryerson Polytechnic Institute as a chemical technologist and moved to Kingston in 1980 to work at the Research Centre of Du Pont Canada. Shortly after I arrived, I made some friends who sincerely lived their faith. They were joyful and peaceful, just like Christ. It was truly a blessing for me to meet like-minded people outside of the circle of my family and long-time friends. Margaret-Anne Charboneau and I were married in 1986 and have been blessed with two sons, Andrew and Luke. Helping to raise our boys and working in a challenging workplace taught me many life lessons. I began to experience and appreciate the concept of life-long learning. I believe that God wants us to become who He has called us to be.

About sixteen years ago, while still working at DuPont Canada, something began to stir within me. Someone suggested that I consider the Permanent Diaconate. I thought about it and prayed a great deal. Then one evening, I hesitantly said to my wife, "I'm thinking of looking into the diaconate." Margaret-Anne's response was immediate -- "FINALLY". She knew that, although I was happy with my job at Du Pont, I would likely be more fulfilled by serving God and the Church. She wanted me to make the first step in that direction on my own. As usual, our wives know where we guys are headed long before we realize it ourselves! Together, Margaret-Anne and I attended an Inquiry Day, and I had her complete support when I eventually applied for acceptance into the program.

The next three years were a wonderful whirlwind of once-a-month weekends of prayer, study, liturgy, and fellowship, frequent home study evenings with diaconal candidates and leaders, and many online courses, which included assignments, essays, homiletic study, discussion, and practice. Throughout the five-year formation program, Margaret-Anne shared my journey. Our spouses have to know exactly what their husbands are getting into. Of course, the involvement of wives in their husbands' ministry is varied, but their support must always be genuine. Throughout the process of formation, we experienced a continuous co-discernment as a diaconal couple -- within ourselves and with the guidance of the Diocesan Permanent Diaconate team, which included Archbishop O'Brien, Deacon Bill Gervais as Director of Deacons, and others.

Margaret-Anne and I were assigned by the Archbishop to St. Joseph's Parish in Kingston, where we have served for almost 9 ½ years. I have been privileged to serve with the Pastor, Msgr. Joseph Lynch, and with Frs. Jan Kusyk, Francis Zambon, and James Quirk. The parish staff and parishioners have been most supportive of us. They have taught me a great deal about the reality of serving the People of God. Over the years, many other fine priests and deacons have also been shining examples to me. I serve in the parish as a homilist and deacon at the altar for Sunday, weekday, and school Masses, funerals, and other liturgies. I also serve in the community as a pastoral visitation volunteer at Kingston General Hospital under the kind leadership of Friar David Collins. I very much enjoy bringing the light of Christ to patients, visitors, staff, and other volunteers. I also endeavour, through funeral liturgies, to bring the compassion of Jesus to those grieving the loss of a loved one. With Margaret-Anne's support, my life journey continues, and I have never been happier in my life!

Come and see if you are called to become a Permanent Deacon. The Archdiocese of Kingston is planning to begin a new Inquiry Period in September 2021. If you would like to learn more about the Permanent Diaconate, please view our webpage, www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca/permanent-diaconate or telephone Deacon Bill Gervais, the Director of Deacons, at 613-548-4461, ext. 116.