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## Eleven men told to â serve in love and joyâ as they are ordained permanent deacons

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### REGIONAL



(Photos by Fred LeBlanc)

By Terence Hegarty

SPRINGFIELD –Eleven men joined the ranks of ordained clergy May 21 as they were ordained permanent deacons for the Diocese of Springfield as part of an 11 a.m. ordination Mass held at St. Michael's Cathedra here. Springfield Bishop Timothy A. McDonnell presided as men from across the diocese became the newest deacons called to serve in the diocese. Family members, friends and fellow clergy looked on and celebrated with the men.

"You are to be raised to the Order of the Diaconate," Bishop McDonnell said to the men just before the Rite of Ordination. "The Lord has set an example; that just as He himself has done, you also should do."

"As deacons...do the will of God from your hearts. Serve the people in love and joy, as you would the Lord."

The new deacons are **Odell L. Daniel** of Springfield; **Paul F. DeCarlo** of Greenfield; **Robert J. Digan** of Lee; **Robert F. Farrell** of Longmeadow; **Kevin M. McCarthy** of Springfield; **James B. McElroy** of Housatonic; **George D. Nolan** of Montague; **Richard J. Radzick** of Hinsdale; **Thomas M. Rickson** of Springfield; **Khanh Ngoc Tran** of Springfield; and **John E. Zick III** of West Stockbridge

Approximately 700 people attended the nearly two-hour ceremony. With the diaconate class of 2011, there are now 79 active deacons in the diocese.



"You travel through this journey of formation, discerning a call to the diaconate, not by yourself," said Deacon Rick Radzick, who will serve at St. Agnes Parish in Dalton. "First and foremost there's my wife, my other family members. I have a young daughter named Grace that's eighteen months old now. And, my priest, my mentor, you have a spiritual director. Throughout the four years, you just really try to draw as close to Jesus as you can and discern this call to serve."

Deacon Leo Coughlin, director of the Diocese of Springfield's diaconate program, told iobserve that the deacons in the class of 2011 were a tight-knit group. "It's a great group. They're very bonded," he said. "I expect a lot out of all of them (and) the diocese does. I just see great things will come from all of them."

Deacons serve in a variety of ministries, mostly assisting in parishes. Diaconate formation is a thorough, rigorous, four-year program, consisting of discernment and college-level courses at Our Lady of the Elms College.

Many of the men said that they had been called to their ministry long before starting in the formation program. "People would say 'Gee, George, have you ever thought about being a deacon? It was like it came right out of the blue,'" said Deacon George Nolan. "I would say, 'No not really.' But, the more that people would ask me that, the more I started thinking about it. And I would talk it over with my wife, Lisa."

"Finally one day, this is probably two or three years of this going on, she said, 'You know, George, maybe you should really think about it because it could be the Holy Spirit here working.'"

Deacon Nolan did think about it, and now, following more than four years of formation, he will serve at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Turners Falls. He says the formation program taught him to think differently. As an engineer, he was used to writing in a very technical manner.

"I had never really written a reflection paper before in my life," he recalled. "So, I start handing papers in and I got footnotes here and I looked up references there. And, one of the guys said to me, he says, 'George, this is a reflection on how you feel. You don't have footnotes on your heart. You gotta' change the around, you gotta' change and go from here,'" George said, gesturing to his forehead, "down to here,'" he concluded as he touched his chest.

Deacon John Zick of West Stockbridge, who will be serving at St. Patrick Parish there and St. Ann Parish in Lenox and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Lenoxdale, said that some people might approach a deacon with certain problems before speaking to their pastor.

"The reason some people will come to a deacon rather than to a priest is because we deal with the everyday problems that other people don't necessarily experience," he said. "We do balance our budget, pay our mortgage and raise our children and get along well with our wives, thank God."

But Deacon Coughlin said that deacons encourage people to share their problems with their priest as well. Deacon Radzick will serve at St. Agnes Parish in Dalton. He told iobserve that he never hesitated in his desire to join the clergy, even at the height of the clergy abuse scandal.

"We fail as individuals. We have to lift each other up," he said. "We've learned a hard lesson from it and we have to go forward. The diaconate is one way in which, because we're such an active sign out in the world...that...I believe we will begin to gain, I guess you could even say the trust of the people, and they'll see that sacramental sign of the diaconate out there and bring people back to the church."

As the men of the class of 2011 approached the altar at St. Michael's Cathedral, they literally took their last steps on their long journey toward ordination. And they walked away from the altar as members of the clergy.

They will go forward, ministering in their parishes and communities, now able to preach the Gospel and to provide many sacraments. In doing so, they will grow stronger still in their faith and will work to deepen the faith of many others as well.

But, Deacon Leo, who has served as a deacon for 10 years, said that one challenge for the men will be the delicate balance of juggling family, work and diaconate life.

"We tell them that family comes first, then your job, and then the diaconate. But, it so easy to get caught up in serving the church... It's so easy, when you're doing something good for someone that makes you feel good. So you might want to go out more often than you really should, because you should be at home with your family."

For those who even think they might be called to this ministry, Deacon Zick has some advice. "Prayer, studying the bible and praying on it, brings you much closer to the person of Jesus Christ, and you're able to form a much more sincere relationship with Jesus," he said.

"I think the diaconate makes you more open to your surroundings and to the great gifts that God's given all



of us," said Deacon Radzick.

Sharing their gifts with the faithful of western Massachusetts, these men now begin, as members of the clergy, serving God and neighbor.

Following are brief bios of the 11 new deacons and their parish assignments:

**Deacon Daniel** is a resident of Springfield and parishioner at Holy Cross Parish there. He is the husband of Catherine (Flynn) Daniel; they have one son, and are predeceased by a daughter. He is a retired deputy sheriff of Suffolk County. He will serve at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Springfield.

**Deacon DeCarlo** is a resident of Greenfield and parishioner at Holy Trinity Parish there. He is the husband of Teresa (Woitkiewicz) DeCarlo and father of two adult daughters. He is currently employed as vice president of operations for A.R. Sandi, Inc. of Greenfield. He will serve at Holy Trinity Parish, Greenfield.

**Deacon Digan** is a resident of Lee and parishioner at St. Mary, Mother of the Church Parish there. He is the husband of Maureen (Cahill) Digan, they had one son who predeceased them. He is retired. He will serve at St. Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Lee; St. Joseph Mission, Stockbridge; and St. Mary of the Lakes Mission, Otis.

**Deacon Farrell** is a resident of Longmeadow and parishioner at St. Mary Parish there. He is the husband of Diane (Rollins) Farrell and they have one son. He is currently employed as a teacher and department chairperson at the Roger L. Putnam Vocational High School in Springfield. He will serve at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Springfield.

**Deacon McCarthy** is a resident of Springfield and a parishioner at Holy Cross Parish there. He is married to Eileen (Kirk) McCarthy; they have two sons. He is currently employed as a school counselor at Springfield's Central High School. He will serve at Blessed Sacrament and All Souls parishes, Springfield.

**Deacon McElroy** is a resident of Housatonic and a parishioner at St. Joseph Mission, Stockbridge. He is married to Suzanne (Tessier) McElroy and they have a son and a daughter. He is a retired justice in the Massachusetts Trial Court. He will serve at St. Mary Mother of the Church Parish, Lee; St. Joseph Mission, Stockbridge; and St. Mary of the Lakes Mission, Otis.

**Deacon Nolan** is a resident of Montague and a parishioner at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Turners Falls. He is married to Lisa (Dubreuil) Nolan and they have three sons. He is currently employed as vice president of support services at Wing Memorial Hospital, Palmer. He will serve at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Turners Falls.

**Deacon Radzick** is a resident of Hinsdale and parishioner at St. Agnes Parish, Dalton. He is the husband of Stacy (Dudas) Radzick and they have a young daughter. He is currently employed as an electrical systems specialist at Solutia Incorporated of Springfield. He will serve at St. Agnes Parish, Dalton.

**Deacon Rickson** is a resident of Springfield and parishioner at St. Elizabeth Parish in Ludlow. He is the husband of Donna (Richardson) Rickson; they have two daughters and a son. He will serve at St. Elizabeth Parish, Ludlow, where he is currently employed as a custodian.

**Deacon Tran** is a resident of Springfield and a parishioner at St. Paul the Apostle Parish there. He is married to Sen Tran; they have a son and daughter. He and his wife own and operate Queen Nails in Northampton. He will serve at St. Paul the Apostle Parish.

**Deacon Zick** is a resident of West Stockbridge and a parishioner at St. Patrick Parish there. He is married to Karen (Keefner) Zick and they have two sons. He is a retired field agent for the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission. He will serve at St. Patrick Parish, West Stockbridge.

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