

Update on our Permanent Deacons – Rae Carter and Greg George

The last spotlight in the Vocations Series sponsored by the Vocations Ministry will be on our two Permanent Deacons, Rae Carter and Greg George. Our parish is very fortunate to have two Deacons; and once Don Moore is ordained we will be blessed with three.

Deacons Rae and Greg were both ordained as Permanent Deacons on June 18, 2000. Both had full-time jobs at the time which they continued along with their Deaconate duties. And both had the full support of their spouses which continues today. They learned to juggle the time it took for their education and formation with their families and work schedules. They knew the sacrifices made would be worth it to not only them but to those they would eventually serve.

In an interview with **Deacon Rae Carter** he made it clear that becoming a Deacon, or Priest, or Sister, or any religious vocation is not a choice made on one's own but rather is a calling from God. It is our responsibility to be open to that call and either answer it or reject it, but we must be honest and open with ourselves and with God and pursue the call before making any decision. He said that any thought or wonder of what serving in a religious life or role would be like is worth pursuing, no matter how fleeting of a thought it is. It could be a call from God and it needs to be explored and prayed about sincerely.



Deacon Rae assists our pastor in the needs of our parish and beyond as no pastor can do it all. Giving service to people in various ways is what he is called to do. Within our parish he leads the RCIA program which is really a twelve-month commitment due to the preparation required for the class presentations and setting up the schedule, including speakers. Another service he provides for the parish is working with those seeking an annulment, to help them heal spiritually and get back to the Church and the Sacraments. Additionally, Deacon Rae offers spiritual counseling and direction to parishioners and non-parishioner Catholics. When asked to do the homily at any mass he lets the Holy Spirit inspire him, and whether the homily seems to be a good or bad one it is not necessarily meant for everyone but for those who God intended it for, those who need it. Lastly, Deacon Rae gives support to the families of deceased parishioners and other families outside of the parish community who have lost loved ones by leading the rosary at a visitation service and/or assisting at the funeral. He even does burial services for non-Catholics and people who are uncommitted to any faith denomination.

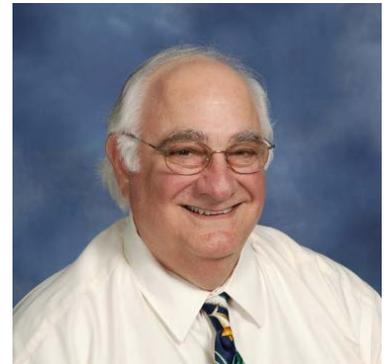
Personal fulfillment is not ever a reason to become a Permanent Deacon but Deacon Rae says there are times he feels blessed to be a Deacon. Through his commitment and service to others he continues to fall more and more in love with his Catholic faith; there is always something to learn. His heart breaks when hearing what some people have endured in life, thus causing them to seek counseling and/or an annulment. Their stories confirm that a deeper respect and appreciation of our loved ones and others is something everyone deserves and it inspires him to be a better husband, father and overall better person.

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Deacon Rae and his wife, Charlotte, will be married 34 years this month. They have four children, eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. They feel blessed in this life and at St. Jerome Church.

Deacon Greg George provided a short biography of his diaconal ministry. He and his wife, Cathey, have been married 48 years as of a few weeks ago and have two children and four grandchildren. Here is his story:

“From the moment I was invited to explore the Diaconate, I wanted it to be God’s call and God’s will and not mine. Early in my formation in the Diaconate, I read a book about diaconal ministry, *“Called, Formed and Sent”* by Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M. Since my ordination in June of 2000 I have tried to hold fast to these three principles: called, formed and sent. I’m not sure how well I have but I keep trying.



When God does call us to being or action, it is often beyond who we think we can be and what we think we can do. When I entered diaconal formation I was teaching religion in a Catholic High School. There, I became passionate about Social Ministry. I thought that was where I would remain throughout my work but God had other plans. He later called me into fulltime hospital chaplaincy without me really being formed or well prepared. So, while serving as a chaplain I had to learn the nuances of such. Over a period of 3 years, I was educated, formed and became certified as a chaplain. There I could live out my passion for social ministry. I served the sick and dying in the hospital and nursing home for almost 13 years. It wasn’t easy, yet the Holy Spirit trusted me and guided me. Every day I was there I knew I was being who God wanted me to be and doing what He wanted me to do. At the same time I was serving at St. Jerome Parish in a limited capacity and did volunteer service to the offenders at the Texas Youth Prison in Mart.

I retired from full time chaplaincy and trusted that God would call me, form me and send me elsewhere. That “elsewhere” is to devote more time to St. Jerome. At St. Jerome I serve the people with the guidance of our pastor. I lead a weekly scripture study; conduct Baptism and Marriage preparation; visit the sick and infirmed in their homes or in the hospitals as needed; facilitate one-on-one RCIA when people aren’t able to attend the regular classes; celebrate weddings; serve at vigil services (rosaries) and funerals for anyone within or outside of our parish; provide pastoral care and spiritual companionship (walking the journey) to anyone who requests it; last and definitely least, I serve at Mass regularly and am trusted to preach from time to time. I do my best to work in the Liturgy of the Hours prayers every day, which I promise to pray. Best of all, God continues to call me, to form me and to send me. He has trusted me and blessed me and my family beyond measure.”

If you would like to visit with either Deacon Rae or Deacon Greg about the Permanent Diaconate program or need any assistance from either of them in the areas noted above feel free to contact them through the Church Office or by email:

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