



Deacon Ward Nolan: A Servant of God

Francis Edward “Ward” Nolan was born on May 14, 1949 in Attleboro, Massachusetts, the son of Robert and Mary Nolan. Attleboro is a city of about 45,000 residents, 39 miles south of Boston and 10 miles north of Providence, RI. As a boy, Ward attended St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Attleboro. He was educated in the Attleboro public school system and came north to Vermont to attend St. Michael’s College in Colchester.

While attending St. Michaels, Ward met Kathleen Teehan at a Trinity College dance in Burlington. Ward and Kathy were married in 1973 at St. Patrick’s Church in Chicopee, MA. They are the proud parents of three sons: Michael, Peter, and Geoffrey. On November 24th they will celebrate 50 years of marriage.

The Nolan family moved to Newport in 1975 and Ward began work at North Country Hospital. In 2008 he became the Administrator of Michaud Manor in Derby Line where he worked for eight years until his retirement in 2015.

In his spare time, Ward enjoys teaching basketball to youth, and presently coaches the girls’ 7th & 8th grade basketball team. His hobbies also include skiing and golfing. He also plays the guitar and banjo. Mater Dei parishioners have benefited from his musical talents at many parish parties.



As a practicing Catholic, Ward recognized that there was a richness and truth to his faith that he had not yet realized, but knew he wanted to know and experience. Encouraged and mentored by Fr. Yvon Royer, Ward decided to try to experience that richness by becoming a deacon.

Ward began his quest to know and understand the richness of his faith by enrolling in the diocesan Lay Ministry Program which provides enrichment for adults who are seeking a deeper understanding of their faith by first laying a foundation in scripture, liturgy, and the sacraments. This understanding of scripture was what the future deacon was seeking. Key to the formation of a deacon is fostering a deeper appreciation of the baptismal call to service in the Church, and inspiring and nurturing the participant’s own spiritual growth to

better enable him to serve and evangelize in his parish and community.

Following two years of study in the Lay Ministry Program, Ward entered three years of diaconate formation. The diaconate program focuses on the study of human, spiritual, pastoral, and academic formation. Human formation targets the growth of interpersonal skills and sound relationships with family, particularly with a spouse, and with parishioners. Kathy's support and encouragement were instrumental in Ward's growth and development as a deacon.



Spiritual formation fosters a deepening relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Trinity, and individual spiritual growth through an intimate involvement with the Holy Mass, the Sacraments and prayer, particularly the Liturgy of the Hours. During pastoral formation, Ward worked to develop a better understanding of people, and the skills and confidence to support and encourage others in their faith journey. Finally, academic formation is accomplished through an on-line program of master's level courses on scripture, theology, and church history, and instruction on writing and preaching homilies.

Above all else, the diaconate is a calling from God and is not a temporary career, but a permanent vocation. The first and foremost priority for a deacon is to love and serve God above all else. It requires careful and prayerful discernment by the aspiring deacon and sacrifice by both the deacon and his family. The program stresses the importance of a strong, stable marriage as essential to the success of the diaconate program, and Kathy's own faith and commitment were instrumental in Ward's journey.

Deacon Ward Nolan was ordained in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Burlington on December 29, 2012 by Bishop Salvatore Matano and has been supporting the spiritual growth of Mater Dei parishioners for the past ten years.

Deacon Ward identifies "being a servant of God, in its many aspects" as the best part of being a deacon. No particular special events since he became a deacon stick out in his mind, but he points to the many personal interactions with people and parishioners in moments of both joy and sorrow as the most rewarding role of his ministry. The people of Mater Dei Parish could not ask for anything more.