



Introducing Deacon Joe and Sherry Hartz

Over the past few weeks you may have noticed two new faces at Holy Mass. We are Joe and Sherry Hartz of Hixson, TN, having recently relocated here from St. Louis, MO. It is our desire to meet you, to develop friendships with you, to learn your stories and to share ours, and to serve.

I, Joe, was ordained into the Diaconate in 2016 for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO. I have recently been incardinated into the Diocese of Knoxville and assigned to the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul. I expect my deacon role here to be both similar and yet different from that in St. Louis. I will be serving alongside the priests at Mass, as well as other liturgical duties and privileges as the opportunity arises. In St. Louis, I served in Spiritual Care in a hospital setting (chaplaincy). Recently I have resumed that role at CHI Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga. Fr. Carter and I have talked about other possible service opportunities that will allow me to serve and get to know you. You will hear more about these at another time.



Sherry is a long-time lector, and looks forward again to serve in this role. She has many talents including leadership roles in parish life and organizations. Her work history includes serving the homeless and needy. She is excited to put her skills to work for you, the parishioners of The Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul. Sherry and Joe have worked together presenting and promoting Catholic programs with speakers on topics important to Catholics today.

Both of us have retired from the business world –I worked in the construction industry, Sherry as a social worker-- yet we maintain our full-time roles as parents of 4 adult children and grandparents of 13. Because none of them lived near us in St. Louis, but were instead scattered around the country, we made the decision to move near at least one of them. Since one of our daughters lives in Hixson, and because we have enjoyed life here in East Tennessee before, God led us to this area. We are home!

Please know it is our hope to immerse ourselves in community with you, to become part of this Body of Christ, here in this parish.



Joe was born in Owensboro, KY, July 2, 1947. He received the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation at Blessed Mother Catholic Church in Owensboro. Joe attended Catholic grade school (Blessed Mother) and high school (Owensboro Catholic).

Dcn. Joe is an alumni of Auburn University, graduating in 1969.

WAR EAGLE! Joe completed a full career in Commercial Construction just before diaconate ordination.

Sherry was born in Opelika, AL. Following her marriage to Joe, Sherry converted to Catholicism approximately 6 years later. Sherry is an alumni of the University of Missouri, St. Louis.

The Hartz' daughter Nathalie and spouse Jeff and children are members of St. Jude Parish in Chattanooga. The other children live in Laurel, MD; Olathe, KS and Los Angeles, CA. Spending time with family, and doing things with the grandchildren are a priority. This requires travel. The Hartz' also enjoy college football and basketball, hiking and bicycling. Meeting new friends and dining with them is another experience high on the Hartz' priority.

In my time here at the Basilica, it is my desire to share Christ in some meaningful way, through my speech and/or actions... that you will say: I want what he has. Or better yet, to see the love of Christ in you, such that we both shine.

Sometimes, in our Faith journey from childhood to adulthood, we miss that stop where we are meant to transfer from obligation to do this or that, to a deep-seated desire for this or that. For example, the Mass can be a mechanical experience if we never fully grasp what it is, heaven touching earth. Or in our moral life, we can miss the transition from motivation out of fear of hell, to the experience of giving ourselves away in love of God and love of neighbor. Somewhere in there we find the meaning of life.

I also encourage you, my new friends, to study the Scriptures, to desire a deeper understanding of God, starting "In the beginning...", continuing through the Old and New Testaments, and ending in the Book of Revelation with a solid understanding that "...the grace of the Lord Jesus is with us all." We can do this in the quiet of our homes, but God created us in community with each other, and so I encourage a study with fellow parishioners. Sometimes, in our study of Scripture we will miss something that another has picked up, and so we grow richer because of the grace that comes through fellowship.

I desire to study the Scriptures with you, to explore the meaning of life, and to become your friend and neighbor.

Again, we look forward to meeting all of you. Please feel free to introduce yourselves and make contact anytime.

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