

The office of deacon is as old as the church, itself, we learned. At one time, some women had been ordained as deacons as well as men. It is believed that the first deacons were seven men chosen by the apostles to assist with the charitable work of the early church, administering to widows, the poor and orphans. Beginning around the Fifth Century, there was a gradual decline in the number of deacons in service. It continued over the years, until the office completely disappeared from the western church. The office was

**Weekly Masses are held at Resurrection every Saturday at 5 pm and Sundays at 4 pm. Pastor is Rev Salvador Anonuevo (Father Sal).**

reinstated during Vatican II, which ran from 1962 until 1965.

Today, there are two classifications of deacons in the Roman Catholic Church: transitional and permanent. Transitional deacons are seminary students who are in the last phase of their training to become priests. They serve as deacons for one year prior to being ordained into the priesthood.

Permanent deacons, such as Barry, are ordained men who have no plans of becoming priests. They may be married with families, or single. If they are single, they take vows to remain single. If one is married, the vows include the promise not to remarry should his wife die before him.

Typically, deacons hold secular jobs in order to support their families, since serving as a deacon is a voluntary position. Along with being a deacon, Barry is also the Pastoral Associate, which is a paid position at Resurrection, so work outside the church will not be necessary for him. A deacon assists his local pastor by visiting the sick, providing grief counseling, working on parish committees and councils, and performing other typical pastoral duties.

Deacons may perform certain rites such as: baptisms; funeral and burial services (outside of Mass); distribution of communion; preaching the homily (the sermon given after the Gospel at Mass); and witnessing marriages.

Barry’s favorite service to the community, he says, is bringing communion to the sick. His friendly face, warm smile and kind eyes make him a natural “people person”. He had just returned from spending time with residents at Runk and Pratt Retirement Village at Westlake when we interrupted his day. Certainly his warm friendly demeanor, comforting prayers and encouraging words would be welcomed by any shut-in. Although

he loves people, it was his love of Christ and the Church, says Barry, that called him to become a deacon.

Imagine our surprise when, about halfway through the interview, we learned that it was actually Barry’s wife, Allison, who was the lifelong, devout Catholic. He had not been baptized into the faith until 2005. Before that, he says, he was “nothing”. His two sons, Samuel and Casey, are both believers, having grown up in the Church. It was because of them that Barry decided to delve deeper into the teachings of the Church. Once he did, he became a believer, and entered the process to become a Catholic Christian: (RCIA) the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It was during a mission to Haiti that the beginnings of his call to a life service first began to stir.

Prior to coming to Resurrection, Barry and Allison, along with their two sons, had lived first in Christiansburg, and then in Roanoke. Three years ago, they bought a “little condo” on Smith Mountain Lake, so they are not truly new comers to this community. Their custom since buying here has been to summer at Smith Mountain Lake and winter in Roanoke, where Allison is a teacher of theology at Roanoke Catholic School and Casey is a high school student. Samuel, following in his father’s footsteps, is a student at the University of Virginia. Both sons have summer jobs at the Lake.

Barry recognizes the fact that in replacing Chris Barrett he has large shoes to fill.

“Chris was greatly loved in this

community, and rightly so,” he says. He knows that he’s following a tough act. He adds, however, how impressed he has been by the warm reception that he and his family have received from members of the parish. He finds members of Resurrection to be “amazing”. He praises their love and dedication to their church, and the fact that they are so involved. “We have so many volunteers. Even the entire grounds (around the church) are taken care of by volunteers”, he said. “The people here are wonderful.”

A self-proclaimed computer geek, Barry started his own internet software business in 1999, which he “operated from the kitchen table” for years, finally selling it in 2013 while completing five years of deaconate training. He was ordained on October 17, 2015.

Prior to joining the Resurrection community, Deacon Barry performed his cleric duties at Saint Andrew Catholic Church in Roanoke.


A beautiful small, framed icon of Saint Stephen is perched on a file cabinet near his desk at Resurrection, a gift to Barry from Allison. She had sat through all of his training classes as he was studying to become a deacon. She had been the lone woman in a class with 14 men, which she attended to receive her Master of Theology, he reports with pride. Saint Stephen is the patron saint of deacons, and was among the original deacons who were selected by the apostles. He was also the first Christian martyr.

Next to Saint Stephen is a picture of the Welch family, which had been taken when the boys were still young children.

“I haven’t taken time to find a more recent one,” Deacon Barry says. One gets the feeling that he probably never will.

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