

Biographies Of the First 24 Deacons

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JOHN PRAVE

John Prave is a parishioner at St. Michael's Church in Union Springs. He and his wife, Karen, have three children: Kathleen, Michelle and John. Prave is employed at Mynderse Academy in Seneca Falls where he is chairman of the department of English. His field education work has included stints at St. Michael's as religious education coordinator and pastoral assistant, and Eisenhower College in campus ministry.

KENNETH SCARCIOTTA

Kenneth A. Scarciotta is a parishioner at St. Ambrose Church. He and his wife, Mary Agnes, have two daughters: Mary Sue and Judy. Scarciotta has been employed by the Brighton Central School District as a Spanish teacher for the past 22 years. His Church involvements include Holy Name Society member, adult choir director, past president of the school board, liturgy committee chairman, parish council member, R.C.I.A. catechetical team member, and Eucharistic Minister. Scarciotta's field education work has included stints at Holy Redeemer Parish, Spanish Apostolate, Genesee Hospital, and St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

EDWARD SERGEANT

Edward Sergeant is a parishioner at the Church of the Epiphany in Sodus. He and his wife, Rose Marie, have three children: Karen, Kristi and Edward. Sergeant is employed by Bausch and Lomb, Inc. His

Church involvements include religious education teacher, parish council member, Eucharistic Minister, Catechumen instructor, and Lector. Sergeant's field education work has included stints at Wayne County Jail, Newark Developmental Center, and Church of the Epiphany.

ROBERT SOLAN

Robert Solan is a parishioner at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Greece. He and his wife, Clara, have six children: Jeanne, Mary Ann, George, Catherine, Barbara and Teresa. Solan is employed at Eastman Kodak Co. as a senior laboratory technician. His Church involvements include usher, Eucharistic Minister, Lector, parish council member and past president, Holy Name Society member, Nocturnal Adoration Society, Boy Scout leader, and Confirmation teacher. Solan's field education has included stints at the diocesan Family Life Office, Liturgy Office, and Our Lady of Mercy Parish.

CARLOS VARGAS

Carlos H. Vargas is a parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi Church. He and his wife, Ceferina, have five children: Carlos Jr., Marta Iris, Jose Manuel, Pablo Jesus, and Myrdna Luz. Vargas is employed by Taylor Instrument, Division of Sybron, as an application programmer. His Church involvements include member of Consejo, member of parish council at Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Lector, delegate to Segundo Encuentro Nacional, liturgy committee

member, and Eucharistic Minister. Vargas' field education work has included stints at Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministries, hospital visitations, and St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

JULIO VAZQUEZ

Julio Vazquez was born in Guayama, Puerto Rico. He and his wife, Maria, and their 13 children Julio, Angel Luis, Carmen Dolores, Maria del Carmen, Miriam, Aida Luz, Jose Antonio, Rosali, Juan, Noel, Norberto, Maria Rosa, and Reynaldo, belong to St. Michael's parish in Rochester. Vazquez attended the Christian Cursillo retreat 14 years ago and became involved with the Hispanic community. He is also charismatic and directs a prayer group. The Vazquezs have 17 grandchildren.

DR. JAMES WHITFORD

Dr. James Whitford and his wife, Jane, have lived 18 years in Dansville where he is medical director of Tri-County Family Medicine. His field education experience in the Permanent Diaconate Program has included establishing a medical clinic at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality and Bethany House in Rochester, pastoral duties at St. Mary's, leading a Bible Study Group, and conducting a course in Religious Education for adults. Previous to his joining the Permanent Diaconate Dr. Whitford was a Lector and Reader, Extraordinary Minister, member of the Human Development Committee and Parish Council. He and his wife have three children: Mary Jane, Nancy Whitford Swonder, and James Jr.

GEORGE WELCH

Our Lady of Lourdes, Elmira, is home parish for George and Paula Welch and their two daughters, Joy and Marian. Welch, who graduated from Notre Dame

High School, received his BA from St. Bernard's in Rochester, his MS from Elmira College, and took Advance Studies at Cornell and Bank Street College, is principal of Thomas K. Beecher School in the Elmira City School District. His wife, a graduate of Cornell and Syracuse Universities, is Professor of Marketing at Mansfield College, and is also a teacher in Religious Education. Welch has been involved in public ministry through religious education for 15 years as a teacher and an administrator of parish programs. He has participated in the National Clown Mime and Liturgical Dance Workshop, and is involved with family camp, Cursillo Movement, Retorno, Child Development Council, and the Elmira Psychiatric Center ministry. He is presently director of the parish Catechumenate.

STANLEY ZAWACKI

Stanley Zawacki and his wife, Ronnie, and their seven children, Joanne, Stanley, Michael, Christine, Stephen, Traci and Teresa, are members of Holy Trinity Church in Webster. Zawacki is manager of Community Relations for the Xerox Corporation, where he has been employed for 12 years. During the last three years, his field education placements for the Permanent Diaconate Program have included a full year working in the Liturgy Office of the Diaconate, a summer project with the Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry group, where he generated a proposal for a major prison program, and a summer assignment at Old St. Mary's in downtown Rochester. Prior to entering the diaconate program, the Zawackis were involved in CCD programs, youth retreats, sacramental programs, Cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal.

What the Permanent Diaconate Is and Does

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Q. It must be quite an adjustment for the wives. What is expected of them?

A. We encourage wives to participate in every single aspect of the program. We have discovered that a majority definitely attend all the sessions with their husbands — so they are part of the whole process of formation. They, too, develop spiritually, academically and ministerially.

Our experience has shown that a few of the wives would like to be part of their husband's ministry — and there places in the diocese that are showing a real enthusiasm for this kind of team ministry of deacon and wife.

Other women do not want an active part but prepare to be knowledgeable and to give their husbands the kind of support each will need in the ordained ministry.

And a few of the wives have seen the program as the opportunity to prepare themselves better for their own ministry in the Church, whether it is one they already have or one they can later adopt as a laywoman.

Q. You mean as a deacon's wife or some other role in the Church?

A. No, her own specific role, not as a deacon's wife; for instance, as a pastoral assistant.

Q. What about assignments? The Church can't move deacons about the way it does priests. How does this work?

A. Assignments come formally from the bishop since they are ordained for the whole diocese and not for a particular place. The bishop views it differently than the assignment of priests. Because of his peculiar situation, the deacon must be a co-determinant. Bishop Dennis W. Hickey (diocesan director of personnel) checks out the diocese for places interested in and in need of a permanent deacon. The opportunities are proposed to the deacons and they indicate their choices. They agree on positions and afterward there is a more specific kind of agreement with the pastor involved on the specific brand of service and then it all goes to the bishop for ratification.

Incidentally, we require the deacon's wife to be a signatory.

Q. Are deacons paid for their services?

A. They get no pay for ministry but they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses for, say, workshops or courses.

We want to project a new image — a clericalization of the order. His present lifestyle will continue even though he is a clergyman. He will not adopt the transient deacon's title of Reverend Minister. He will simply be called Deacon Smith, or whatever. He will not wear a Roman collar — we don't want to add another layer of clericalism to the Church. He will, of course, wear proper clerical vesture for liturgical events.

What qualifications must one have to be accepted in the program?

A. He must be a man of strong faith with a demonstrated record of leadership. He must be at least 30 years of age and in good health. He must be emotionally mature and responsible. He may be married or single. However, if he is single he must accept the discipline of celibacy.

He must have the time and ability to complete the program. If he is married, he must have the wholehearted support of his wife and family. He must be able to provide for those who depend on him financially.

Our standards are fairly high. Simply being a concerned Christian does not signify a vocation for ordination. He must have the willingness to make a permanent kind of commitment. He must be willing to work within the Church structure and he must have an openness to a variety of ministries. He will not be ordained for a specific place or group.

Q. How does one apply?

A. A prospective applicant should contact the program director who will send him full information on the program and on the pre-acceptance process. The applicant and his wife should study the material and also seek the advice of his parish priest or other spiritual adviser then submit the formal application to the director.