

# 15 permanent deacons to be ordained Sept. 25

**B**ishop Barry C. Knestout will ordain 15 men as permanent deacons, Saturday, Sept. 25, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. The Mass will be livestreamed on the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's website and Facebook page.

On these pages, The Catholic Virginian introduces readers to those who will be ordained.



## Joe Badalis

**Wife:** June Badalis

**Parish:** Parish: St. Joan of Arc, Yorktown

**Occupation:** U.S. Air Force civil servant, retired Air Force

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jas 2:15

**Favorite saint:** St. Augustine and St. Ignatius

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate likely began when I decided I didn't want to be a priest and wanted a family, although I had no idea there was such a path. It started germinating when I rediscovered my faith upon entering the Air Force. God actively fertilized my formation at the National Basilica in 2004. Since entering formation with the diocese, my faith has been turned up-side-down. I had 12 years of Catholic education, but no real understanding of what I professed. These last four years fixed that. I deeply appreciate our faith, especially as expressed by Vatican II. The criticality of the sacraments to all of us carrying Christ into the world cannot be overstated – lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi (The law of prayer is the law of belief, is the law of life).



## John A. Carey

**Wife:** Kassaunrda B. Carey

**Parish:** St. Victoria, Hurt

**Occupation:** Sales supervisor

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jer 29:11

**Favorite saint:** St. Benedict

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My formation began when I received my first Communion. In my heart, I felt a vocation to something greater than myself when God asked, "I did this for you, what will you do for me?" The diaconate is a humbling service where I can serve God at Mass and, more importantly, serve everyone in every aspect of my life. The impact of formation is difficult to describe other than God has changed me. He is the potter; I am the clay. This change has made me a much better disciple, husband and father; to God be all the glory. I have never been more honored than to have my wife by my side through this process, and those in my cohort are truly my brothers.



## Michael Francis Carlucci

**Wife:** Paola Apruzzese Carlucci

**Parish:** Sacred Heart, Richmond

**Occupation:** Supervising appraiser, City of Richmond

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Phil 4:8

**Favorite saint:** St. Francis of Assisi

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

About 20 years ago, Deacon Paul Mahefky made a simple proposal for me to consider the diaconate. My return to the Church had been fairly recent and Paola and I had three small children at the time. (Since then, we have been blessed with two more!) I felt it was poor timing. I loved the faith and did whatever I could to serve my parish. The lives of the saints had always inspired me, and I would be reminded again and again that God was not looking for perfection or perfect timing, but for an open and willing heart. Just over five years ago, my pastor, Jesuit Father Shay Auerbach, and Deacon Charles Williams provided the final words of encouragement for me to step on to the road of discernment. Deacon Anton Siochi told me early on that this journey would be transformational. He was right.



## Kirk Daniel Collins

**Wife:** Valérie Collins

**Parish:** St. Mary, Richmond

**Occupation:** Database/web programmer consultant

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jn 9:25

**Favorite saint:** St. Francis of Assisi

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate came to me during prayer before daily Mass in 2013. At first, I was confused about what it could mean. Through continued prayer and conversations with my wife, Valérie, I came to a greater understanding of what God was asking of me. Subsequent conversations with my pastor, Father Michael Renninger, and pastoral associate, Sister Pat McCarthy, provided to me a sense of what the call to serve might look like. They encouraged me to seek Christ in service to others while listening to the guidance of the Spirit. Long before formal formation began, God placed into my life amazing people of faith who continue to inspire and challenge me.



## Steven Cottam

**Wife:** Megan Cottam

**Parish:** Our Lady of Lourdes, Richmond

**Occupation:** Director of evangelization and catechesis

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Mt 25:40

**Favorite saint:** St. André Bessette

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

The call to the diaconate has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. From studying about St. Stephen in first Communion class, to studying about vocations in confirmation class and on from there. I have always had a deep love of the Church for her liturgical worship and her service to the poor, and my love of these things finds a new fulfillment in the ministry of the diaconate. My formation — including the classes, as well as the support of my mentors, my brother candidates, my wife and my parish — have helped deepen my prayer life and develop my pastoral skills so I can be a better servant and companion to all God's people.



## Jose J. Cuenca

**Wife:** Emma Cuenca

**Parish:** Church of the Incarnation, Charlottesville

**Occupation:** Procurement/buyer

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Mt 5:7

**Favorite saint:** St. Francis of Assisi

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate began around 2001. During that time, I was going through a soul-search. I asked a man of God (a layperson) to help me discern what I was going through at that moment. He instructed me on the Wisdom God and got me involved in Church ministry. Since that time, I have been serving God and neighbor, intentionally. I feel that it is God who has put me on this path to the diaconate. The diaconate formation has humbled me and has given me a wider view and understanding about my Catholic faith. I encourage all lay people to take some theological courses, if possible. In my humble opinion, the reason people are leaving Catholicism is because we do not fully understand our Catholic faith and sacraments.



## Mark De La Hunt

**Wife:** Catherine De La Hunt

**Parish:** Holy Name of Mary, Bedford

**Occupation:** Engineering manager

**Favorite Scripture passage:** Lk 1:78-79

**Favorite saint:** St. Joseph (my helper); St. John Paul II (my inspiration)

**Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

True story. Over a period of years, my calling went like this: God said, "I want you to be a deacon." I said, "I'm not holy enough." He said, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you" (Is 43). I said, "I'm not healthy enough." He said, "You will flourish in my courts, still bearing fruit when you are old" (Ps 92). Then, just before the first inquiry session in 2016, he had me care for my dying brother in his last week of life. That experience cemented God's calling in my heart. During the four years of formation, God awakened me to my ignorance and flaws. Finally, he assured me it would be OK, for he would be "my word, my power and my wisdom."



## Daniel “Dan” Derringer

**Wife:** Elizabeth “Beth” Derringer  
**Parish:** St. Andrew, Roanoke  
**Occupation:** Chemistry professor  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Phil 2:3  
**Favorite saint:** St. John Paul II

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate is the latest juncture in my journey of faith. In the ‘60s, I was baptized Lutheran; in the ‘70s, I worshipped as a Baptist; in the ‘80s, I met and married my wife, Beth (with whom I have three lovely children – Dani, Amanda and Jesse); in the ‘90s, the Holy Spirit used Christ’s presence in the Eucharist to call me into the Catholic Church, and then six years ago, the Lord used the occasion of my mother’s death to invite me into a deeper relationship with him and his Church. Guided by the Spirit, formation has prepared me for the important work I will do as a minister of the word, of liturgy and of charity and justice.



## Liem Do

**Wife:** Beth Nguyen  
**Parish:** Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs, Richmond  
**Occupation:** Programmer  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jn 3:16  
**Favorite saint:** St. Francis of Assisi

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

I used to take priests to my church every weekend during the shortage. One of them happened to tell me that I could be a permanent deacon. I smiled and asked him to pray for me. I had not understood this term until my pastor introduced me to the diaconate program convocation. Each year of the formation changes my life tremendously. Soon after, during the discernment, my heart and soul were wide open to God’s love more. The closer to the altar, the better. The more serving to the poor, the further resounded his Holy Name. I am grateful to have the support of my wife and daughter. It means so much to serve the Church as an icon of Christ the Servant!



## James “Jim” Findley

**Wife:** Leanne Findley  
**Parish:** St. Bede, Williamsburg  
**Occupation:** Aerospace engineer  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jn 1:5  
**Favorite saint:** I can’t possibly pick a “favorite.” My confirmation saint is Joseph.

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

I first heard of the permanent diaconate in 1993, when my nephew was baptized by a newly ordained deacon. Five years later, I was received into the Catholic Church and was drawn to the vocation. I discerned the call over the following years, and in 2015, I saw an article in The Catholic Virginian announcing the formation of a new cohort. I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me, and with the support of my wife and children, I began formal inquiry. The formation has been challenging but wonderful. I consider the men in my cohort brothers, not friends. I am not certain I would respond the same, but after going through formation, I can comprehend how martyrs could face death joyfully, singing hymns praising God.



## Hoang Le

**Wife:** Dao Le  
**Parish:** St. Pius X, Norfolk  
**Occupation:** Retired nuclear engineering manager  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Phil 2:10  
**Favorite saint:** St. Paul

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

I believe that God has done many incredible but subtle things for me on my journey from Vietnam to the United States, allowing me to not only care and provide for my family but also to live a life in servitude to his Word. Although I am not and never will be “perfect” in any sense of the word, I realize that God does not call the qualified, but he qualifies the called! Through the diaconate formation, I have grown in wisdom and in faith. I have realized that using God’s gifts to strengthen the faith in others encapsulates the essence of what it means to be a deacon — a life dedicated to spiritual service to others.



## Lawrence Wayne Mikkelson

**Wife:** Lise Mikkelson  
**Parish:** St. Ann, Ashland  
**Occupation:** Land conservation specialist (part-time)  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Rom 8:31b-39  
**Favorite saint:** St. Joseph

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

God has called me to a life of service and has provided signs along the way, such as a strong desire to assist others. God was also calling by instilling in me a love of his Word, helped along by my grandmother who read and studied Scripture with me from a young age. The diaconate formation has helped me to grow spiritually and to develop my relationship with Jesus. The formation instructed me in the theology that is foundational for the Church’s teachings. Journeying toward diaconal ministry with other men holding different perspectives helped me to become more understanding and accepting, as well as even more deeply inspired by God’s message to us in Scripture.



## Myles A. Pocta

**Wife:** Rene’ S. Pocta  
**Parish:** Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach  
**Occupation:** Business owner  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** 1 Cor 13:13  
**Favorite saint:** St. Francis

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate began years ago when parishioners and deacons from Ascension community urged me to consider the vocation. Initially, I felt a bit challenged with balancing such an undertaking with my marriage vocation and responsibilities. Eventually, and after praying over it and discerning it with my wife, Rene’, I finally heard and joyfully accepted God’s call.

The diaconate has had a profound impact on my faith journey and relationship with Jesus Christ. It has truly been a life changing experience. Through the support of my wife and family, the diocese and our parish, deacon mentors, my cohort and men of faith, I am honored, humbled and now prepared to share this experience, proclaim the Gospel and serve God’s people.



## Domingo Caratachea Torres

**Wife:** Marta Murillo Castro  
**Parish:** Sacred Heart, Richmond  
**Occupation:** Civil engineer  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Mt 7:21  
**Favorite saint:** St. Ignatius of Loyola

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My calling to the diaconate was not a single event, but rather a series of events over a period of years. I can trace and identify a need within me, a profound desire in my heart for something, 31 years back. This desire led me to begin a life of service to the Church at Sacred Heart Parish in Richmond 12 years ago, where I had the opportunity to begin an active prayer life through Ignatian Spirituality. The desire just grew stronger, and, through the support of my wife and our pastor, I enrolled in the diaconate program. Prayer and my formation in the process have deepened my faith in, and love for, God and made it stronger, and most certainly have facilitated my discernment to the permanent diaconate.



## Gregg K. Whisler

**Wife:** Josie Whisler  
**Parish:** St. Edward the Confessor, North Chesterfield  
**Occupation:** Mathematics teacher  
**Favorite Scripture passage:** Jn 16:33  
**Favorite saint:** St. Thomas Aquinas

### **Describe your call to the diaconate and the impact your formation has had upon you:**

My call to the diaconate is partially a response to my experience in the military. Many times, while deployed, Catholic soldiers do not have the good fortune of pastoral care provided by a priest. We read in Acts chapter 6 that the apostles selected the first seven deacons to assist them in serving the Christian community. Like the original seven, my call is from the desire to provide pastoral care and service to the community, particularly those who may not have easy access to a priest.