

From the Deacon's Wife

The topic for today is “**What is the role of the deacon's wife?**” I have mentioned before that initially, the wife must give permission for her husband to begin training to become a Deacon. During the time of training or formation, she must attend all classes and other formation activities along with her husband. Once the Deacon is ordained, however, the Deacon's wife has **no official role**. That's right, she is not ordained, does not make a vow of obedience to the Archbishop, and has no obligations to the Church, except to be faithful to her covenant of marriage.

Many deacon wives **choose** to serve in one or more ministries within the parish or the diocese. Some serve in ministries they can share with their husbands, some in ministries of their own. Our intention from the beginning was to focus on ministries we could share. During formation, Kevin & I tried a number of things. We took communion to Immanuel Hospital, led communion services at Parson's House assisted living, trained for and visited the sick at Clarkson Hospital, and taught Marriage Preparation for those seeking con-validation (legally married for more than 5 years, seeking the sacrament of marriage). Following Kevin's ordination, we initiated and continue to lead Stephen Ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish. It's easy to get overcommitted when you keep trying new things and don't give up any. This brings us to what I believe is the **most important role of the deacon wife** – to see that her husband doesn't take on more than he should and to keep some balance in his life. Wife and family should come first as that commitment was made first, job or career comes second, and diaconal duties come third. Yes, priorities ebb and flow, and when people are in need, his role as a Deacon takes priority, but not to the extent that family is always last.

I have only exercised this role twice. The first time was during formation when I finally said “you have to give up something” to Kevin. We were just too “busy” and some of the ministries were conflicting, time-wise, with each other. I suggested which ministry he should give up and why, but I let him choose. The second time was after we came to Holy Name. You see, Kevin in his eagerness to serve, wanted to assist Father at all the Masses every weekend at both Holy Name and St. Richard's. I was OK with sharing him most of the time, but we have a long established family brunch at my Mom's on the first Sunday of every month. I suggested to Kevin that one Sunday a month, he should step back from assisting at the altar to attend the Brunch. He resisted this and didn't want to tell Father he needed a Sunday off. I pushed back for two reasons, (1) family should come first, and (2) potential deacons (and their wives) in the parish need to see that family does, in fact, come first at least some of the time. So that is why we are not at the 10:30 A.M. Mass on the first Sunday of each month. We go to Saturday evening that week, and on the third weekend of the month, we attend all the Masses as Kevin (generally) gives the homily. This gives Father one week each month that he doesn't have to prepare a homily.

Next up – are you ready for Advent? Do you have an Advent wreath? Can you explain the symbolism to your kids? And, who should light the candles? Stay tuned!