

# *Wives of Deacons*

## ORDINARY WOMEN, EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

**W**hen the Second Vatican Council renewed the Order of Deacons as a permanent part of the ordained ministry of the Catholic Church, it also permitted that married men might be ordained to this ministry. The result of this decision has been that over 90 percent of the more than 30,000 deacons around the world are married with families. More than 14,000 deacons – most of whom are married – live, work, and minister here in the United States.

This video presents the experiences of six women who are the wives of deacons in the United States. They share quite candidly their thoughts and feelings about the impact of their husbands' ordinations on their own lives and on the lives of their families: the joys, sorrows, challenges, and blessings of diaconate life. What emerges is the realization that there is no single model for the deacon's wife to follow, no single role. Each wife must determine through prayer and reflection what her response to her husband's diaconate is going to be. Each couple and each family must also determine their roles. Sometimes a wife is already quite active in formal ministry before her husband ever becomes a deacon. In other cases, a wife is drawn into a form of team ministry with her husband, while in still others, the wife chooses not to exercise any sort of public ministry whatsoever. In every case, the wives of deacons and their husbands will find their own unique response to the diaconate in their lives.

The video might be used as part of a parish or diocesan information session on the ministry of the diaconate. It might also be used as part of the diaconate candidate formation process, or for ongoing formation after ordination. The following *reflection questions* are divided into these three general categories.

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### INFORMATION SESSION

#### Reflections After Viewing

**Allow a few minutes for silent group reflection, and then form small discussion groups of 4 to 6 people.**

- How familiar were you with the ministry of the deacon before you saw the video?
- What surprised you most about the information provided in the video?
- Do the wives of deacons assigned to your own parish have a support group like the one depicted in the video?

- If you had the chance, what additional questions would you like to ask the wife of a deacon?
- How has the information contained in the video affected how you view the family of a deacon?
- How has the information contained in the video affected how you view the ministry of the deacon?

## PRE-ORDINATION FORMATION

### Reflections After Viewing

**Allow a few minutes for silent group reflection, and then form small discussion groups of 4 to 6 people.**

- Which experiences shared by these wives and deacons best reflect your own concerns or experiences? Why?
- Have you and your spouse discussed the impact that ordination will have on each of you as individuals as well as on your family as a whole?
- Parishioners and other partners in ministry may share confidential information with the deacon. Will the deacon's obligation to maintain these confidences – even from his wife – become an issue in your own life?
- Does your parish or diocese offer any form of organized support group for the wives of deacons such as the one described in the video?
- In the video, who especially impressed you? Why? How might this person/these persons serve as a role models or inspirations for your own life?

## CONTINUING FORMATION AFTER ORDINATION

### Reflections After Viewing

**Allow a few minutes for silent group reflection, and then form small discussion groups of 4 to 6 people.**

- Which experiences shared by these wives and deacons best reflect your own? Why?
- What has been the impact of diaconate ordination on your own family?
- How might diaconate formation programs better support and prepare candidates and their wives and children for life after ordination?
- What structures exist at the present time in your own parish or diocese to provide a support system for the wives of deacons in your own area?
- In the video, who especially impressed you? Why? How might this person/these persons serve as role models or inspirations for your own life?

## OTHER AVAILABLE USCCB RESOURCES

*Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons/Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*  
From the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy.

English: No. 5-242, 144 pp.

Spanish: No. 5-806, 148 pp.

*Foundations for the Renewal of the Diaconate*

Writings on the historical development of the diaconate.

No. 185-7, 276 pp.

*Service Ministry of the Deacon*

Explores the deacon's place within the Church.

No. 240-3, 125 pp.

To order copies of the video, *Wives of Deacons: Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives*, the resources listed above, or to obtain a catalog of other USCCB titles, call toll-free 800-235-8722. In the Washington metropolitan area or from outside the United States, call 202-722-8716. Visit the bishops' Internet site at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Para pedidos en español, llame al 800-235-8722 y presione 4 para hablar con un representante del servicio al cliente en español.

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The video, *Wives of Deacons: Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives*, and this accompanying online user's guide were developed as a resource by the Committee for the Diaconate of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). They were reviewed by the committee chairman, Bishop Robert C. Morlino, and have been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. William P. Fay  
General Secretary, USCCB

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