

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Where Do Deacons Come From

An anyone who has ever heard a child ask “Where do babies come from?” might be surprised that someone has actually come up with a companion question: “Where do *deacons* come from?”

I’m delighted to report that this book for children answers that question—and may answer it, too, for grown-ups. In fact, anyone who is curious about the married man with the angled stole who putters around the altar, baptizes babies and expounds every now and then from the pulpit should check out Elizabeth Ficocelli’s friendly primer, “Where Do Deacons Come From?”

It’s part of a very good vocational series for young people that includes “Where Do Priests Come From?” and “Where Do Sisters Come From?” And it answers that question—where *do* deacons come from?—with clarity, sensitivity and an engaging sense of curiosity. The first page of this slim book (fourteen pages in all, cheerfully illustrated by Shannon Wirrenga) sets the tone:

Do you ever wonder where deacons come from?

Do they grow on a farm? No. Are they made in a factory? No.

Deacons come from God’s people. They once were young boys, just like you.

As children, these boys played football, kickball and tag. Some of them collected bus or traded baseball cards. They may have dreamed of traveling, going to college, having a family, or starting a business. As these young men grew and followed their dreams, they also held in their hearts a strong desire to serve Jesus and His Church.

In plain language that the USCCB and the Vatican might want to study, this little book goes on to explain the basics of discerning a vocation, studying, being ordained, and doing it all while also being a husband and father. It also helps to describe some of the things a deacon does in his ministry.

Theological nuances are gently overlooked—no discussion here about “ontological changes” or “sacramental character” or even the ongoing debate about whether women might one day be deacons. (That’s an argument for another column...) No, this book is simple, straightforward, and wonderfully accessible.

The sister of a priest I know was once asked, “Where do you think vocations come from?” And she thought a moment and then replied—bluntly but accurately—“Everywhere!”

You never know where a vocational seed will be planted, or how it might take root, or what might start that seed growing and flowering. I wonder if this book (and the series it’s helping to continue) might be a way of making the ground for a religious vocation more fertile.

This would be a wonderful tool for any catechetical program for schoolchildren—and a great gift for anyone in the family of a deacon or deacon candidate who might be wondering just what this vocation is all about.

My friend Deacon William Ditewig has said that the diaconate will only become fully accepted as a vocation when young people say, “When I grow up I want to be a deacon.” This book could help make that a reality.

Curious for more?

For information on how to order the book, visit **Elizabeth Ficocelli’s** website—or the website of the publisher Bezael Books, www.bezaelbooks.com. Of course, it’s also available via Amazon.com.

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