

A change of direction for the 'deacon and his wife'

Deacon Frederick Passauer and his wife Kathy were booming business owners of an insurance company in Manchester, when they heard God's calling. The couple sold their business and their home and moved to the Deep Creek Lake area to start their new business, serving parishioners of western Maryland.

"We knew this was our goal. To be in ministry," said Mrs. Passauer. "The people here have really embraced us."

Mrs. Passauer said when her husband entered the diaconate they had planned to eventually move to Western Maryland but not for a few years.

Almost a year ago Deacon Passauer was asked by Father Jay O'Connor, director of the division of clergy personnel, to be the permanent deacon for St. Michael, Frostburg; St. Peter, Westernport; St. Gabriel, Barton; St. Joseph, Midland; St. Mary of the Annunciation, Lonaconing; St. Patrick, Mount Savage and St. Ann, Grantsville; as well as being the pastoral associate for St. Joseph and St. Mary of the Annunciation almost a year ago. All seven parishes have some 1,575 registered families.

"Both parishes have been very welcoming and also very accepting of the fact that they are now being served in a parish by a permanent deacon," said Deacon Passauer referring to St. Joseph and St. Mary.

Deacon Passauer said the parishes have been "very accommodating and understanding" that he and his wife live many miles away and therefore have established a household at St. Joseph where they stay three or four nights a week.

“For the two of us our sacrament of matrimony is primary to our lifestyle even in the diaconate,” said Deacon Passauer. “They have accepted us as a package. I’m much better at what I do because of who we are together.”

Even though Deacon Passauer has a new vocation the couple continues to work on projects together. They are involved in activities like Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, marriage encounter and baptism classes.

“This is Fred’s ministry so I can’t do some things but I am present and I am more of a support system,” said Mrs. Passauer. “It’s interesting how the people of the parishes have embarrassed us both.”

Deacon Passauer said he enjoys celebrating faith and life with people who share the same beliefs. He and his wife agreed they are serving a very lively church community. There are many dinners, gathers, meetings and fundraisers to attend, said the couple.

“I have not regretted one day leaving a very successful insurance company to be the permanent deacon out here,” said Deacon Passauer. “The people are hungry for what the Catholic faith has to offer them.”