

Parishioners glad to have converts as pastors

With reference to “Is the ordination of married converts new?” (Father John Dietzen, CR, June 28), it may be of interest to note that the practice of ordaining married Lutheran ministers was begun in 1951.

In 1957 Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) gave permission for an American, married Lutheran minister to enter the seminary in preparation for ordination on condition that he find a bishop willing to sponsor him. A few American bishops offered the former minister, Ernest Adam Beck, an assignment but their offers were rejected apparently lest scandal be given. Why having received the sacrament of marriage prior to ordination, as was the practice in the church until the 12th century, would be scandalous, was not explained.

Eventually, Bishop Herman Volk of Mainz provided an assignment for Father Beck and Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) agreed. Subsequently, other married Lutheran ministers and Episcopal priests have been ordained in the U.S. and parishioners are gratified to have them as pastors.