

Seven priests to be ordained in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

By Elizabeth Lowe

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Deacon Steven Roth remembers being 5 years old, coming home from school and retreating to his room to celebrate Mass - using his desk as an altar and Necco wafers as Communion.

His childhood dream of becoming a priest will come to life June 9 when Archbishop William E. Lori ordains Deacon Roth and three others to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The 10 a.m. ordination Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland.

“I think it’s really a mixture of excitement and a bit of anxiety and fear,” Deacon Roth said of the ordination, “because it is such a monumental moment in my life and the church.”

Deacon Stephen Cotter, Deacon Issac Makovo and Deacon Jaime Garcia-Vasquez will also be ordained to the priesthood during the special liturgy. All were ordained to the transitional diaconate May 21, 2011, by Cardinal Edwin F. O’Brien - their final step before becoming priests.

Deacon Makovo came to Baltimore from the Archdiocese of Mombasa in coastal Kenya and Deacon Garcia-Vasquez is from Colombia. Deacon Cotter is a native Oklahoman who joined the U.S. Army as a chaplain assistant and served two tours in Iraq. He is being co-sponsored by the Archdiocese for U.S. Military Services and will serve as a military chaplain and a priest for the Baltimore archdiocese after his priestly ordination.

During the June 9 Mass, Deacon Jason Catania, a former Anglican priest who was ordained to the Catholic transitional diaconate May 12, will be ordained a Catholic priest by Archbishop Lori for the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter - a jurisdiction

established by Pope Benedict XVI to minister to former Anglicans.

Deacons Anthony Vidal and David Reamsnyder, also former Anglican priests, will be ordained Catholic transitional deacons June 2 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and ordained as priests for the ordinariate during the June 9 liturgy.

Deacons Catania, Vidal and Reamsnyder previously served as Anglican clergy at Mount Calvary Church in Baltimore, a former Anglican parish that was received into the Catholic Church in January.

"I think the moment when the archbishop lays his hands on my head will be a very powerful thing," said Deacon Catania, 40.

Deacon Catania felt called to be an Anglican priest about 20 years ago, but "even when I was ordained in the Anglican Church I knew I would be a Catholic someday; I didn't know when and how," he said.

"I feel extremely blessed to reach this point after so many years," said Deacon Catania, who will celebrate his first Mass as a priest at Mount Calvary June 10.

Deacon Roth, 33, has been serving at St. Margaret, Bel Air, since 2009. He will celebrate his first Mass there June 10.

"I think it's almost similar to a young guy dreaming of being a Major League Baseball player," Deacon Roth said of his upcoming ordination.

Deacon Roth, a native Pennsylvanian who taught from 2002 to 2008 at the University of Scranton and Marywood University, both in Scranton, Pa., said each year he took off from work during Holy Week and remembers thinking "what a great life that would be to do parish work full time."

"While I love psychology and I certainly loving helping people in the field," Deacon Roth said, "no one ever comes to a psychologist when they're happy."

In 2008 he entered St. Mary's Seminary and University in Roland Park, from which

he graduated earlier this month.

As a priest, Deacon Roth is looking forward to celebrating baptisms and weddings and caring for the sick.

“I’m providing sacraments at all different moments of their life,” Deacon Roth said. “It’s such an overwhelming calling. I just trust in God that it will all work out.”

Deacon Roth, who remembers nudges of encouragement to consider the priesthood, urges the faithful to pray for vocations.

“Just knowing that people are still praying for me in my vocation and future vocations gives me a lot of encouragement,” he said. “If you feel the slightest inclining or calling from God to be a priest, give it a shot, you lose nothing. If you don’t respond, you lose an awful lot.”

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