

# Two men to be ordained transitional deacons May 12

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The Archdiocese of Baltimore will ordain to the diaconate two men preparing for the priesthood May 12. Hamilton Okeke and Angel Marrero, respective natives of Nigeria and Puerto Rico, will be ordained transitional deacons at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien will preside at the 10 a.m. ordination Mass.

Okeke is currently assisting with pastoral work at St. Ignatius in Hickory, and Marrero is serving at St. Michael the Archangel in Overlea. Both are studying at St. Mary's Seminary in Roland Park.

Cardinal O'Brien will also ordain Jason Catania, a former priest of the Anglican Church, to the diaconate for the Personal Ordinate of the Chair of St. Peter, which Pope Benedict XVI established earlier this year for Anglicans who wish to enter full communion with the Catholic Church.

Okeke, 32, felt called to the priesthood as a child and joined the seminary after high school. While there, he met Vincentian Father Sylvester Peterka, pastor of St. Cecilia and Immaculate Conception in Baltimore, whose work frequently brings him to Nigeria, and the two began to correspond. Okeke's parents died during his undergraduate studies, causing him to doubt his calling and leave seminary. Still, the idea of becoming a priest kept "piercing my heart," Okeke said. Eventually, Okeke decided to follow Father Peterka to Baltimore and resume studies for the priesthood.

Marrero, 45, served in the Puerto Rico National Guard in Germany during Desert Storm before joining a Carmelite community in Puerto Rico when he was 29. He left the community in 2008. He worked as a cook in Atlanta, Seattle and Baltimore before joining the seminary for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He first thought about becoming a priest when he was 5 years old, he said, and aspires to become a military chaplain.

The transitional diaconate is the final step before ordination to the priesthood.

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