

- 1) I have been active in the church my entire life. When I was an altar boy, I was certainly thinking of priesthood as a possibility. That call was suppressed after High School Chemistry. That became my new focus. I got a college degree in Chemical Engineering, fell in love with a fellow musician at the Newman Center on campus and we got married. the call to be an active lay person never faltered. I was on Parish Council often, volunteered often and was a church musician for 50+ years.
- 2) When my wife died in 2009, I had decision to make. One night, 2 months later, I woke from a sound sleep to a voice saying, "Now will you follow me?" The next week in the bulletin was an announcement about following God's call at a "come and see" weekend at Pope St. John Seminary. So, I went. It was way too early, but I had to find out. I spoke to my friends and co-workers, they all knew that this was the correct path for me. I just needed a bit of time to come to that realization by myself. Every time I thought of a reason that I could not enter the seminary, God blew it apart within 24 hours. The next year, I went to the "come and see" weekend again and I had already been accepted as a seminarian.
- 3) At this moment, I have been ordained for 6.5 years. I was at Saint Michael in North Andover for 4 years as part of a 3 priest team. I am now at Saint Michael in Lowell <singing> All by myself... <end singing> for the last 2.5 years. I am still learning, I still have much to learn.

Bonus: I know that Mary Collins gave you my name. I'm not sure that she told you why. My wife and I were parishioners and musicians (guitar, organ, electronic saxophone, hand percussion & singers) at St Catherine's for many years. Deacon Richard Joy encouraged me to consider the diaconate program, and I would have (class of 2000), but my wife was progressing in her disease and would not have been able to attend classes. When she passed, the folks there were instrumental in kicking off my vocation journey. Sister Kelly Francis was in that music group with us. Her example of graduating college and then leaving it all behind for the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal gave me a great example. Deacon Bill Dwyer and I pushed each other and he was ordained the year before I was. Deacon Fran Burke was in the mix there as well. We cannot overlook Father Thomas MacDonald, also from Westford ordained in 2013. The community of Saint Catherine's fostered vocations. I know of 3 deacons, 2 priests and 1 religious sister. There may be more that I am unaware of. If you are ordained, that will be 4 deacons. God speaks to us through others in our lives. He is speaking a lot at Saint Catherines.