

The following is Andy's personal account of his vocation story and can be found at <https://dphx.org/deacons/cohorts/ordinands/>

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I was blessed to be born in Phoenix, where I have lived almost all my life. I was raised in a Catholic family and was the seventh of eight boys in the family. I went to St. Vincent de Paul grade school and then to Bourgade Catholic High School. I met my wife Pam in eighth grade. We were good friends all through our high school years. We started dating after graduation and were married a short time after that. Pam and I have been married for 37 years. We have 5 grown children... four married and one engaged. We are blessed to have nine grandchildren... so far!

I am proud to have served as a corpsman in the U.S. Navy for 6 years. I also served as a firefighter on the Tempe Fire Department, where I worked for 28 years and retired in 2015. I am currently serving as the Coordinator of Stewardship at St. Joan of Arc Parish. This position has helped me to gain insight into how a parish works, and allowed me to meet many of the folks who make up this special parish community. It has been so edifying to get to know and work with the people of God at St. Joan of Arc.

My journey to the diaconate started a few years before retirement from the fire department. I started wondering what God might want me to do next. A few people had commented in passing about me becoming a deacon, but I just shrugged them off. Then, one night my wife asked me if I had actually considered it. That was when I started to really think about how the Lord was giving me hints about how my life experiences and God-given gifts might be used to serve others. So, it was then when I started to pray specifically for God to reveal His will for me and became open to consider if God was calling me to serve Him as a deacon.

When I entered into formation, Pam and I agreed to take it one year at a time and to re-evaluate after each year. That helped me to see formation as a process to make me a better Catholic man, not just a path to ordination. I knew the Lord would use the formation to prepare me for whatever He had planned for me, whether that was ordination or not.

The seven years of formation were such a growth experience for me and my family. I took the formation seriously and I put my whole self into it. I always felt that if the time came for me to lay prostrate at my ordination, I wanted to be 100% sure that God wanted me there. I can say to you now that I feel very humbled, yet honored to accept the Lord's invitation to be ordained a deacon. My wife and family strongly support me.

I am blessed to serve under Bishop Olmsted in the Diocese of Phoenix. I will continue to strive for virtue and holiness as I work in service of the Lord and the people He puts in my path.

Throughout this time of discernment, my wife Pam and I have prayed a very simple prayer to keep our hearts open to the Father's will and focused His mission:

“Lord, help me to become the person you created me to be, so I can do the things you created me to do. Send me where I can use my gifts and work with others to build your kingdom and glorify your name!”