



DEACON BRIAN CONROY, *servant of the people of God*

In his current assignment at St. Mel's Parish in Woodland Hills, Deacon Brian Conroy spends his time tending to parishioners' pastoral needs. As an active member of the congregation and community for over 17 years, Deacon Brian feels privileged to serve the parishioners.

When asked about his journey toward becoming a deacon, he said, "My roots in the diaconate go back to my association with the Sisters of Notre Dame in the 1980's at St. Rose of Lima in Simi Valley. I fondly remember Sr. Teresita Keliher who was the Director of Religious Education at the time. Deacon Elmer Dugas was the main inspiration for [me] becoming a deacon."

Recently ordained to the diaconate himself, on June 11, 2016, Deacon Brian is now Director of Diaconate Formation, in charge of assisting the discernment and formation of qualified candidates who feel called to the ministry of diaconate. Currently there are 85 men in the five-year program. He explains that a man who wishes to participate in this process must be between 30 and 60 years of age, be an active Catholic in a valid marriage or committed to the single life. Deacon Brian adds, "diaconate

formation itself is a demanding task, especially when considering the size of the community involved." Since his responsibilities as Director of Diaconate Formation often require weekend classes, Deacon Brian assists with weekday Masses in his parish several times each week. In addition, he and his wife, Esperanza, serve in bereavement ministry.

During October, Deacon Brian collaborated with Sr. Antoinette Marie Moon and Sr. Marie Paul Grech in facilitating a retreat for the fourth-year diaconate candidates. He commented that he "has always noticed a peaceful way about the SNDs and their charism." As he continues his work and ministry, he reflects on what the sisters have exemplified over the years. He noted, "The Sisters of Notre Dame are clear examples of joyful service, hope in the face of personal challenges, and the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ. They witness to the Gospel by living in loving community and thus are a palpable presence of committed, loving service among the people of God."