

Jim Curtain, Victoria

I was ordained a deacon for the Military Ordinariate (diocese) by Bishop Geoff Mayne on 23 September 1995 at the RAAF Chapel, Point Cook, Victoria. This was about the halfway point of my full-time RAAF career. For the first half of my RAAF career I worked in the personnel, financial, organisational development and training areas, but after ordination I worked as a Chaplain, providing pastoral and spiritual care to RAAF members and their families of all faiths and none.

Over the whole 26 years I served at RAAF bases in NSW, VIC, Malaysia, SA and QLD and I've seen active service in the Middle East and East Timor. I was very lucky through my RAAF chaplaincy time to work with a fine bunch of colleagues, Protestant, Anglican and Catholic. This has been one of the biggest graces of my ordination – the delight of team ministry. I was also lucky in that the priests, deacons and communities of the local dioceses that I worked in – Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane – were always welcoming and hospitable to Vicki and me.



Prior to the Air Force, I worked as a music teacher in schools and adult education. Since leaving full-time RAAF at the start of 2008 I've ministered as a school chaplain and my main ministry now (the 'day job') is as Director of Mission at St John of God Nepean Rehab Hospital, Frankston, VIC. I help out with sacramental ministry, preaching and music in my local parish (Nazareth parish, Rickett's Point) and will continue with RAAF ministry on an occasional basis. I was a member of the formation committee for the Brisbane Diaconal program, and hope to become involved with the Melbourne program as it develops.

An image of diaconate that works for me is one I heard from an Anglican theologian some years ago. He said the deacon was the 'boundary rider'. Where the priest is at the centre of the local Christian community, its leader and inspiration, the deacon was the one who made sure that those on the margins and borders were included, and who called the church community to mission.

Most of us in our ministry work with people on the margins – whether it's the couple on the margins of church who come for marriage or a child's baptism, the worker in a church school or hospital who may none the less feel marginalised from the 'official' church, or the lonely old person, marginalised from society by age, poverty or infirmity, wanting the gift of our time. Certainly in my work in the RAAF and Catholic schools and hospitals I've come across many who see themselves as marginalised from church or society and part of diaconal ministry for me is to try to show them the loving face of Christ, and demonstrate that the church is a place of joy. I realise of course that all Christians are called to do this, that the work of evangelism and care to those on the margins is not just restricted us deacons, but I do believe that it is a special call that can be traced in diaconal ministry from the Seven and our brother Lawrence onwards.

I have tertiary qualifications in theology, ministry, music, education and administration and particular interests in ethics and spirituality. I enjoy playing music and singing, and read a lot of history and murder mysteries. I also believe firmly that the Carlton football club will rise again and soon resume its rightful place as a power in the land.

Vicki and I have been married for 29 years, and we have two adult children, Christina and David. We're both Melbourne people, and as both children have settled down here this is probably where we'll stay!