

DEACON PATRICK EDWARDS (Adelaide)

Ordained just weeks ago, I really am the 'new kid on the block'. I am still awaiting an official appointment but I am looking forward to what lies ahead for me and my wife Jan.

I am aged 66 and have been married to Jan for 41 years. We have five adult children who are all married and we have been blessed with eight grandchildren, the joy of our lives.

Retired since 1998, I was employed in the banking industry for 36 years. This required us to move to many towns and cities in South Australia and Victoria and my career took me from an office junior in 1958 to senior State management positions. I loved banking. It is a people industry where your satisfaction is drawn from relationships with your customers and fellow staff members. At the height of the banking crisis in the early 1990's, I accepted a retirement package and shortly afterwards was employed by the Salvation Army as office supervisor of the State fundraising and public relations department. I spent four very rewarding years with the Salvos and I learnt much from them. Their practical approach to living out the Gospel message inspired me and had a marked influence on my decision to express interest in the diaconate.



In my recreational time, I have a passionate interest in the AFL and follow, with some considerable pain, Port Adelaide (the Power). Jan and I took to caravanning in retirement and we both find this a wonderful way for us to get away together and share our love of travelling Australia. Music, lawn bowls, reading and enjoying a good red wine are other areas where I can relax.

In late 2005, I expressed interest in pursuing ordination to the diaconate. Following a series of interviews, my placement on the Ministry Formation Program was approved and I commenced studies and formation at the beginning of 2006.

I am married to the most wonderful person I have ever known and we are blessed with a loving family. It has been a source of great joy for me that my involvement in the Program had the full support and encouragement of my wife and my family. Jan has been enthusiastic in her support and shares pride in my call to ordained ministry. Her concern is that my commitments will limit our time together as a couple and as a family. She points to our caravanning as one area likely to be shelved. As much as I endeavour to assure her that our lives will remain in balance, I sense she still harbours these concerns.

My children were somewhat surprised at my decision to pursue the diaconate but are genuinely proud of my involvement.

My journey on the Program has been a profoundly challenging experience. My formal studies have exposed me to the unique language and thought of the theologian whilst my formation has progressively drawn me into a deeper awareness of God in my life. As my spiritual director explained it to me I have been taken to deeper waters where I am distinctly uncomfortable. My security props have been removed and I am challenged by a new way of

experiencing the Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. My spiritual director advised me to resist moving back to the comfort of waters closer to shore and to trust my God and myself to uncover the wonderful mystery I am taken into. Assuredly, the journey will not end where I am now, but will continue throughout my life as a pilgrim soul.



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I can see growth in my experience of God in the happenings in my daily life, both the momentous and importantly, the ordinary. In many ways I feel I now know less than I did before I embarked on the Program. Much of this is due to my understanding of what I have learnt to date and how minute this is in the total mystery of God, the consequence of the deeper waters I am in.

Until recently I still harboured doubts as to whether I was being called to ordained ministry. Some adverse events in my life and my experience of God being with me in them have calmly convinced me that this is indeed God's call. Now that I have been ordained my prayer is that I can faithfully grow in my experience of God, respect my commitment to my wife and family and with integrity, humility and obedience serve in whatever my God calls me to.