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Permanent deacons are called to serve

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Wallace Dalman of Portland and Kenneth Votava of Sharon were ordained permanent deacons for the Diocese of Fargo during a Nov. 19 Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo.

"As I ordain you to the diaconate today, my heart is filled with joy as your bishop," Bishop Samuel Aquila told the new deacons during his homily.

"As deacons, you are configured to Christ the servant, to Jesus who willingly obeyed and kept the Father's commandments . . . The will of the Father, as it was the very food of Jesus, must also become your food," he said.

In their service as deacons, the bishop said, they will encounter those who do not believe or who reject Catholic teachings. "With those you must have the patience of Jesus, the compassion of Jesus, the love and peace of Jesus."

Bishop Aquila told the deacons' wives and their families that it is important for them to understand the commitment the men make in their ordination as permanent deacons. They are called to both the vocation of marriage and the vocation of the diaconate, which are never to be in competition, he said.

Addressing the deacons, Bishop Aquila said, "The first vocation you are called to is that of the sacrament of marriage. Keep that always in your minds and in your hearts . . . You are to love your wives as Jesus loved the Church." That, in turn, will help them love "all entrusted to your pastoral care," he said.

Bishop Aquila also asked the wives, families and the faithful to pray for the deacons, saying their prayer "is essential to help them live the vocations to which they are called."