

# **Commitment to serving others inspired Ramon Morales' journey to permanent diaconate**

Ramon Morales has always felt a call to serve others. After 15 years as an adult altar server at St. Agnes Parish in south Edmonton, he plans to continue serving others in his vocation as a deacon.

"For me it's always about serving," said Morales, one of three men scheduled to be ordained to the permanent diaconate Aug. 11 at St. Joseph's Basilica.

"I would like to serve more, and I always believe that it is because of my love of the Lord, my willingness and my desire to serve, that really made me decide to apply for the diaconate."

Morales was raised in a strong Catholic family in the Philippines.

A pipe designer for the oil and gas industry, he spent 15 years working overseas, far away from his home and family. He brought his wife and two sons to Canada in 2001 so he could stay closer to them and still continue in his career.



After volunteering as an adult server at St. Agnes Parish, Ramon Morales also had to balance a full-time job – which required him to work weekdays in Fort McMurray – with the diaconate program on his weekends in Edmonton. Chris Berthelot, Grandin Media

He soon volunteered to be an adult server at St. Agnes Parish. It was there that he met Deacon Guy Germain and began to consider the diaconate for himself.

“We don’t have the permanent diaconate formation and study program in the Philippines, so I was not totally aware about the program. He told me about it, and I said, ‘Yeah, I think I could do that!’”

However, Morales held off on deciding until 2013, when he felt confident that he could serve God better as a deacon. Even after making the decision, his journey wasn’t an easy one.

The program has an intensive screening process, and Morales wasn’t sure that he would be accepted.

“Not everybody is going to get in, but it’s part of God’s plan that I was accepted into the program,” he said with a smile.

He also had to balance a full-time job – which required him to work weekdays in Fort McMurray – with the diaconate program on his weekends in Edmonton.

Spread out over 40 weekends, the four-year program includes an exhaustive study for a certificate in theology at Newman Theological College.

Morales' wife, Elizabeth, said that while she felt unsure about being a deacon's wife at first, her marriage has been strengthened by her husband's journey to ordination.

"It's about his service to God, (and) that's why I supported him all the way. I'm very proud of him," she said. "Now we pray together, we are closer together."

Morales' ministry involves two kinds of service – serving the priest during the Mass, and serving others in love, also referred to as charity.

"That's what deacons are all about – liturgy and charity," said Morales. "We're really visible in the liturgy part, with the preaching and the homily. But of course, the charity isn't visible, with serving the poor, the needy, and the marginalized."

When it comes to his future work as a deacon, Morales is confident that he'll have all the help he needs

"I always believed we're being guided by the Lord every step of the way. It's only through God's grace that we are here."