

Deacons' stories



Deacon Alfred Banyya

One morning I picked up a leaflet from the back of a church in south London. It was the first time I learnt about married and celibate deacons and opportunities for serving the Church through the Permanent Diaconate. Although something told me it was what I had been searching for in my faith journey, I dismissed it.

Over the following five years the feeling repeatedly came back to me, but I put it off. During Christmas of 2007 the feeling became so intense that I could no longer ignore it. I recall going to my then parish priest and telling him that I had decided to apply for the Permanent Diaconate. Nearly dropping to his knees, uttering "Mother of God" he made the sign of the cross. Beaming with a smile, he said, "It will open all sorts of avenues". I did not understand what he meant.

Looking back now, coming to 12 years since my ordination, indeed unexpected avenues have opened. I have found myself exercising my ministry of charity as a hospital chaplain leading a multi faith team. This has been alongside my ministry of the word and the altar in the parish, which surprisingly seems always 'new'. Most of all my family life has been enriched and I can confidently endorse the assertion that for married deacons, the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of holy orders mutually enrich each other.