

Doug Grandon

**By Jennifer Willems  
of The Catholic Post**

Pope Benedict XVI has approved ordination to the Catholic priesthood for Dr. Douglas Grandon, a former Anglican priest who was received into full communion with the Catholic Church at Sacred Heart Church in Moline in 2003.

He will be ordained in accord with a pastoral provision, announced by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1980, that permits married former Episcopal (Anglican) priests to be admitted to the Catholic priesthood in the United States.

While Dr. Grandon is the first to be ordained in the Diocese of Peoria according to the terms of this pastoral provision, there are approximately 100 former Episcopal clergymen who are now ministering as Catholic priests across the country.

Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, N.J., appointed ecclesiastical delegate for this process by the Vatican in 2005, was notified of the pope's decision on April 18. Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, CSC, who sponsored Dr. Grandon, received the indult on April 25.

Bishop Jenky said he consulted about this twice with the members of the Presbyteral Council, an advisory group of priests in the Diocese of Peoria, and they recommended it. The first time was when Dr. Grandon sought permission to start the process leading to ordination and the second time was when the process actually began.

**DR. GRANDON** will be ordained to the transitional diaconate this Sunday, May 4, during the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Peoria. Bishop Jenky will preside.

On May 24, he will join Deacons Gary Blake, Geoff Horton, Robert Lampitt, Kevin Lucas and Dustin Schultz at St. Mary's Cathedral for ordination to the priesthood by Bishop Jenky. The Mass will begin at 10:30 a.m.

"I'm 49. These young men have many more years ahead of them. I honor them for committing their lives," said Dr. Grandon, who has served as the director of the diocesan Office of Catechetics since 2004. "May God help all of us to be faithful priests until God calls us home."

**THE CHURCH** has a rigorous process for evaluating candidates, who have been selected by their bishop, for ordination according to the pastoral provision approved by Pope John Paul II, Dr. Grandon explained.

"Once the bishop has indicated his willingness to sponsor a candidate, a sizeable dossier is assembled," he told The Catholic Post. "That allows the ecclesiastical delegate ---

Archbishop Myers --- to evaluate the candidate's educational experience, ministry experience, family history and other important details."

This dossier is forwarded to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"If the candidate is allowed to proceed following this initial evaluation, he is brought in for a rigorous set of examinations on seven subjects at Immaculate Conception Seminary in the Archdiocese of Newark," Dr. Grandon said, noting that the areas covered include Scripture, dogma, liturgy, spiritual theology, moral theology, church history and canon law.

**AFTER THE** examinations are evaluated, the bishop and the candidate receive an extensive general reading list and prescriptions particular to the candidate. This reading and study is expected to be completed before the next round of tests, generally held 12 months later.

The second phase of testing takes the form of written examinations covering four questions from each of the seven disciplines. These were sent to Bishop Jenky and administered in the Diocese of Peoria over two days.

For the final series of seven oral examinations, he returned to the Archdiocese of Newark.

"Once the candidate passes those seven exams, all of his material is once again sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome," Dr. Grandon said.

If Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the congregation, gives his assent he makes his recommendation to Pope Benedict XVI. The ordination of former Episcopal priests must be approved personally by the pope, Dr. Grandon explained.

**"OVER THE** last five years I have repeatedly sought out the counsel of well-known and not so well-known church leaders," he told The Post. Among them have been Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR, author, television host and a founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal; Father Richard John Neuhaus, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, author and editor of "First Things"; and missionary priest-colleagues in the Russian Far East.

"All of them have given their wholehearted support and blessing to my future as a Catholic priest," Dr. Grandon said.

In addition, he has the backing of his wife of 26 years, Lynn Grandon, who is director of the diocesan Office of Respect Life and Human Dignity.

"She believes this is what I was put on earth to do," Dr. Grandon said.

The couple has four children at home --- Hope, 19; Christian, 17; and Heidi and Kirsten, 11 --- and two grown daughters.

“In one sense, for the past 26 years we have been a family devoted to ministry in God’s church as we understood it at the time,” Dr. Grandon said.

**THAT JOURNEY** has taken him from ministry as a missionary to Yugoslavia and ordination in the Evangelical Free Church of America in 1978 to ordination as an Anglican priest of the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy in 1999. Along the way he founded a Christian academy for poor families and The Church on Glen Hill, an Evangelical Free church, in Peoria.

The Grandons also lived in England for a year so Dr. Grandon could do post-doctoral work at Oxford University.

As he continued his theological studies and reflected on the Eucharist, however, Dr. Grandon said he grew concerned and shared his doubts with his Episcopal bishop.

“If there was any doubt, it had to be resolved,” he said. “Once I’m ordained a Catholic priest I will have absolutely no doubt that I really am feeding God’s people with the body and blood of Christ.”

**WHILE ORDINATION** to the Catholic priesthood is something he has been discerning for more than four years, Dr. Grandon acknowledged that people are likely to have questions about how a married priest supports his family and where they will live. And what about the vow of celibacy made by transitional deacons and priests in the Latin-rite church?

“There might be a very simple question: Is a married former Anglican priest a full-fledged priest, like a celibate Latin-rite priest? And the answer is yes,” Dr. Grandon said.

“Must a married Catholic priest live a life of continence with his wife? That’s something people wonder about,” Dr. Grandon said. “The answer is no. We understand from the theology of the body that the sex act between married people is not defiling, therefore it’s not required that a married Catholic priest live as brother and sister with his wife.”

Dr. Grandon added that there are provisions for married clergy in the Maronite-rite and Byzantine-rite Catholic churches.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith also addressed this issue when the pastoral provision was announced in 1980: “In accepting former Episcopalian clergy who are married into the Catholic priesthood, the Holy See has specified that this exception to the rule of celibacy is granted in favor of these individual persons, and should not be understood as implying any change in the church’s conviction of the value of priestly celibacy.”

As for living arrangements and salary, Dr. Grandon said these matters depend entirely on the situation of the individual priest and are worked out with the bishop. Many married former Episcopal priests already own their own homes, as the Grandons do.

**TO PREPARE** for his sacramental ministry as a Catholic priest, Dr. Grandon has been working with mentors assigned by the diocese and also has received assistance from the faculty at Immaculate Conception Seminary in New Jersey.

“The candidate is always heavily involved in Masses during his preparation,” he added.

Registered at St. Philomena’s Parish in Peoria, the Grandons have been attending Mass and serving as adult faith formation leaders at St. Mary’s Cathedral. In addition to facilitating “The Great Adventure” Bible study series as a couple, Lynn has offered a Bible study class for children on Sunday mornings.

Dr. Grandon also has been involved as a lector and acolyte at cathedral Masses and at St. Bernard’s Church in Peoria.

He will return to St. Mary’s Cathedral on Sunday, May 25, to celebrate his first Mass at 10:30 a.m. The homilist will be Msgr. Marvin Mottet, a senior priest of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa.

Assisting will be Father Maynard Brothersen, also a senior priest of the Davenport diocese. Both priests served as mentors while Dr. Grandon was teaching at Assumption High School in Davenport after being received into the church.

**LARGELY AT** peace with the step he is taking, Dr. Grandon admits to some concern about one thing.

“The primary struggle for me is what I suspect it is for everyone who is preparing for ordination as a Catholic priest and that is am I really willing to be crucified with Christ every single day and to endure whatever suffering God may send my way,” he said.

“To be a Christian, we are all supposed to embrace that, but to be a priest, we are all supposed to embrace that, but to be a priest, you have no other option than to do so,” Dr. Grandon told The Post. “That’s the primary struggle and I have embraced that reality. May God give me the grace to continue embracing the cross all the days of my life.”