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SCOTTISH CATHOLIC OBSERVER

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Bumper weekend for vocations at St Mary's Cathedral

By Ryan McDougall

A DEACON and a permanent deacon were ordained at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, last week and a man was admitted to the ministry of Acolyte.

David Edvardson will serve as a deacon until his priestly ordination in December, Eddie White was ordained to the permanent diaconate, and Tom McEvoy has been admitted to the ministry of Acolyte.

Former episcopal priest Deacon Edvardson said he felt he has 'come home'.

He moved to France 10 years ago, after serving in the Episcopal Church for around 30 years. Having lectured in biology, he felt a calling to serve God in his late twenties.

"I had a very powerful experience of God's presence," he recalled. "At the time I put it to the back of my mind but these experiences kept happening, and eventually I found the Episcopal Church. I always had an attraction to the Catholic Church though, I liked a lot about it.

"The Episcopal Church welcomed me in and I was eventually ordained and became a curate."

Deacon Edvardson took early retirement at 55 and moved to



Far left: Archbishop Leo Cushley ordains David and Eddie as deacons. Left: Archbishop Cushley with (from left) Eddie & Tanya White, Moira & David Edvardson and Anne & Tom McEvoy
PICS: PAUL MCSHERRY

France with his wife, where he converted to Catholicism.

"There was no specific experience that led me to Catholicism, but when I was in the Episcopal Church I started to feel like it wasn't where I was supposed to be, and felt I had so much in common with Catholics," he said.

Deacon Edvardson had hoped to be ordained as a priest in France, but the diocese eventually decided against the ordination, and so he and his wife decided to move back to Edinburgh.

"France hadn't ordained a married man since the 1100s,"

Deacon Edvardson said.

"When we came back to Edinburgh, I bumped into a friend who is Catholic and told them I had returned because things hadn't quite worked out.

"They said they were going to be meeting Archbishop Cushley and would talk to him about it. I got a call from the vicar general about a week later and that was that."

Deacon Edvardson is once again serving in Kelso where he had served as an episcopal priest. His ordination is due to take place on December 8. He is excited to serve as a priest and

he said his wife, Moira, is 'absolutely delighted' for him.

"I've come home—that's the only way I can describe it," he said. "I'm now where I should be, (excited) to be able to help people and to serve the Church.

"Being a deacon is a ministry in itself, but giving the Sacraments is something I feel I need to be complete."

Meanwhile Deacon Eddie White, a married father of three and Maths teacher from Edinburgh, said he 'felt drawn' to the permanent diaconate. He added: "I have a secular vocation of service in teaching.

"As a committed Catholic, I felt what I had to offer, what the diaconate wanted and what it gave back to the Church drew me to it and allowed me to respond to the Lord's call both in a practical and a spiritual way."

Deacon White, who works at Ross High in Tranent, first contemplated his vocation while at Holyrood High School in Edinburgh.

Asked what he is most looking forward to in his new ministry, he said: "No more essays! I'm looking forward to the chance to serve the sick and the marginalised."

"Doing this while holding down a full-time job gives me some unique opportunities to be a face of the Church in day-to-day life."

He added it would not have been possible without the support of his wife, Tanya, his mother, who helped with his three young children when he was busy with his training, and his parish priest, Fr Jock Dalrymple of St John the Evangelist and St Mary Magdalene's in Edinburgh.

Offering his advice to others considering a vocation in the permanent diaconate, he said: "If you feel you are being drawn towards the diaconate, you should explore it. People in their late thirties should consider the training and the draw to service if they feel the call.

"A chance to meet someone who has gone through it always helps, and I would extend a welcome for a meal and a chat if anyone wants to ask either Tanya or myself about our experiences."