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# CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

## ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD OF FATHER DAMIEN LOCKE

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PHOTO: Dave Robinson Photography

# ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD OF FATHER DAMIEN LOCKE

*Saints Mary & Joseph Cathedral Armidale*

**SATURDAY 14TH AUGUST 2021**

On Saturday 14th August at 10am in a closed Cathedral in Armidale, in the midst of a Covid-19 Lockdown, Father Damien Paul Locke was Ordained a priest.

Father Damien Locke, grew up in the New England Region, specifically in Uralla and went through school both at St Joseph's Uralla and then O'Connor Catholic College in Armidale for High School.

After a career as a flight attendant and manager with Emirates Airlines, he answered his calling for further religious studies and attended the seminary in Beda College, Rome where he completed his studies and was ordained a Deacon on the 17th June 2020 (also in a Covid-Safe Locked down ceremony).

Father Locke's Ordination Mass was livestreamed for those family, friends and clergy who were unable to attend due to restrictions and more than 550 participated live in the streaming.

We spoke with Father Locke to see how he felt about his ordination and in another Covid Lockdown.

"I really could not believe it when it was announced that the Armidale LGA would move into a snap lockdown on 7th August. After much consideration and with the kind support of Bishop Kennedy I decided to push on with the plans for my priestly ordination on 14 August, the Memorial of Saint Maximilian Kolbe and the 22nd anniversary of Bishop Kennedy's priestly ordination.

I was no stranger to a Covid ordination in lockdown after my diaconate ordination took place in the height of Italy's lockdown in Rome on 17 June 2020. I was blessed to be able to have a very small number of family members and close friends attend the ordination but I

was actually very moved looking out into an empty Cathedral – I think because it prompted me to recall, in a very pointed way, all the people who would have filled those pews. In an unexpected way, it allowed me to feel a unique closeness to the very many people who have supported me along my journey thus far. I also received an overwhelming number of messages of support and love and was delighted that so many people were able to follow the ordination and my Mass of Thanksgiving online.

I have now arrived in Moree for my first parish appointment. It has been a most unusual start here too – I have only been able to celebrate my first Mass in public a month after my ordination. I am so excited about the opportunities to serve you, the good people of the Diocese of Armidale. Please continue to pray for me as I assure you of my prayers."

In his Homily, Bishop Michael Kennedy said "I don't know whether Damien did so deliberately, but a common thread that runs through every Reading he



*Father Damien Paul Locke*

chose for today is gladness and joy. From the Prophet Isaiah in the First Reading, we hear “The Lord has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the poor... to replace their mourning robe with the oil of gladness.” In the second reading Saint Peter says to the elders or priests “Be the shepherds of the flock of God that has entrusted to you... not simply as a duty but gladly”.

Bishop Michael continued, “May the giving of yourself through priestly life and ministry, bring the joy of the Gospel, the joy of the Lord, to all whom you serve and may it also be a source of great joy in your own heart too. May God bless the life and ministry of Father Damien!”



*Father Damien Paul Locke during prostration.*



*Covid-Safe “Kiss of Peace” between Bishop Michael Kennedy and Fr. Damien Locke.*



*Father Damien Locke delivered a heartfelt speech after his ordination.*



*Father Damien Locke concelebrating Mass.*

# DIACONATE ORDINATION OF REVEREND PETERPAUL CHIKEZIE

*Saints Mary & Joseph Cathedral Armidale*

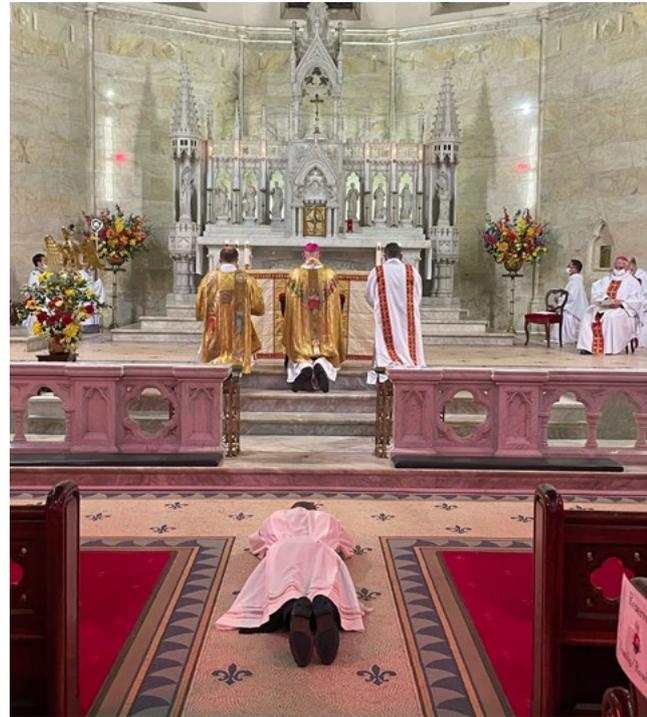
**MONDAY 12TH JULY 2021**

On Monday 12th July Peterpaul Chikezie was Ordained into the Sacred Order of Diaconate through the laying on of Hands and the Invocation of the Holy Spirit by Most Reverend Michael Kennedy DD Bishop of Armidale.

His Ceremony took place at Saint Mary & Joseph's Cathedral at 5:30pm in a Covid safe ceremony. Reverend Peterpaul's ceremony was livestreamed for his family as well as his friends who were not able to make the ceremony due to restrictions.

Reverend Peterpaul said "I am most grateful for the opportunity provided to me by the Diocese of Armidale and Bishop Michael Kennedy and I'm looking forward to continuing on my journey to Priesthood."

A small reception was held afterwards at the Armidale City Bowling Club with members of the clergy and parishioners wanting to celebrate with Reverend Peterpaul.



*LEFT: Reverend Peterpaul Chikezie addressing the Cathedral after his Ordination. RIGHT: Bishop Michael Kennedy laying on of hands during the ceremony to Reverend Peterpaul. TOP: Reverend Peterpaul during prostration. BOTTOM: Reverend Damien Locke, Bishop Michael Kennedy, Reverend Mr Paul Manvell, Bishop Gerard Hanna & Reverend Peterpaul celebrating after his Diaconate Ordination.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON VOCATIONS

## *My Wrestle with God*

### A REFLECTION BY BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY

From quite a young age I knew what I wanted to be and do in life. I wanted to be a husband and father, and I wanted to be a schoolteacher. At twenty years of age, I completed Teachers College and started teaching in a Catholic High School. After a few more years I started to think more seriously about marriage, but at the same time I began to sense within me a call from God towards the priesthood.

I still remember the 6th of May 1990 very clearly. At the end of Mass on Good Shepherd Sunday (the day on which the whole Church prays for vocations), I said to the Lord in my prayer “If you want me to be a priest, I’ll do it.” As time rolled by, I grew less and less committed to the notion, but the Lord seemed to have taken me at my word and the inner calling to the priesthood (over which I seemed to have no control) grew stronger and stronger.

As well as detecting the Lord’s call and growing in my awareness and appreciation of His goodness and love for me, I was also conscious of my insufficiencies and sinfulness and experiences of self-doubt. And so began a twelve-month period in which I wrestled and argued with God. This wrestling ended up being a wonderful time in my life because it became an honest and open interior dialogue with God through which my personal relationship with him grew stronger. I later realized that this must have been his plan all along!

I am glad to say that the Lord won the wrestle! But I consider myself a victor too, for in willingly submitting and saying yes to the good and holy will of God I have found my path and purpose in life. As Saint Pope John Paul II said, “always say yes to God and he will fill you with his happiness.”

On the 14th of August this year our Diocese received a new priest when I ordained Father Damien Locke. A

month earlier on the 12th of July I ordained Reverend Peterpaul Chikezie a Transitional Deacon on his way to becoming a priest next year. We are blessed that the Lord has called these two men to join the rest of our priests and deacons in loving service of His People. But we still need more! Might the Lord be calling you?

Whether your vocation be to the priesthood, religious life, marriage, or service in the single life, it is the plan that God has for you. Talk to Him about it, wrestle with Him about it, but please let Him win! Say yes to God and let him fill you with his happiness.



*TOP: Bishop Michael Kennedy with his late mother, Fidelma Kennedy on the day of his Ordination to Priesthood.  
BOTTOM: Bishop Michael Kennedy being Ordained a Priest & Laying on of Hands by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON VOCATIONS

## *God Writes Straight with Crooked Lines*

### A REFLECTION BY FATHER HENRY KINGSLEY ETOH

I was born in Nigeria and worked in Equatorial Guinea teaching English as a second language before I became a priest. I arrived in Australia in February 2013 and was ordained a priest 8th December 2016 by Bishop Michael Kennedy.

The saying above, “God writes straight with crooked lines”, fully captures the story of my vocation to the priesthood. It was a journey started, not with that purpose in mind and riddled with ups and downs, but which God had directed towards his own plan. With the benefit of hindsight, I believe it was really the will of God.

I started my journey in the minor Seminary in 1983 at the tender age of twelve, together with over two hundred other boys, but withdrew in 1996 after obtaining a degree in Philosophy. I spent nine years in Equatorial Guinea as a teacher, before responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to consider the priesthood once again.

I have now been in the priesthood for almost 5 years and the joy I have encountered so far is indescribable. I am very grateful to God for this privilege, because I am aware that no one takes it upon himself. Though I sacrificed a few things along the way, I have gained so much more in return.”



*Father Henry Kingsley Etoh*

## *God's Vineyard*

### A REFLECTION BY FATHER SABU PULIMALAYIL



*Father Sabu Pulimlayil*

Vocation is a mystery and my Vocation is a testimony that it's not what I want to become in my life but it's what God wants me to become. The times I was in crisis of my vocation I could experience the presence of God and also in times I wanted to leave my vocation God was there keeping me strong.

I am the youngest among seven of a good catholic, middle class family. Being the youngest I got the advantage of experiencing the love and care of my parents and siblings, but the disadvantage of obeying all my older brothers together with my parents! I was a naughty boy at home and school. I was very attached to my mother and I learnt all my prayers, my devotion to Mother Mary and Saints from her.

My first desire to become a priest was motivated by one of our old Parish Priests, but as I grew older I forgot about it. When I graduated from my high school I wanted to join in the military and to do something for my country, I went for the recruitment and I was rejected since I was not tall enough to become a soldier. But God has another plan for me. This time I thought of helping my father on the farm which made him so happy. But being with him working so hard on the farm I was tired and wanted somehow to escape from home.

**“EVEN THOUGH I CAME TO THE SEMINARY TO ESCAPE FROM MY FATHER'S FARM WORK, GOD PUT ME IN HIS VINEYARD AS HIS WORKER.”**

It so happened that a priest who belongs to an order called the Rogationist of the Heart of Jesus invited me to the seminary. I accepted it and went to the seminary for a vocation camp. Staying with the priests and the brothers there, my childhood desire to become a priest came back to me. Even though I came to the seminary to escape from my father's farm work, God put me in his vineyard as his worker.

## *An Unexpected Journey*

### A REFLECTION BY FATHER JOHN MCHUGH

My journey to priesthood was a little unusual. Following the death of my adored wife Julie in March 2003, I felt God was gently encouraging me to ponder a new direction in my life, which led me on an amazing journey from Tamworth to Rome. My period of discernment also involved our three fine and supportive son's David, Kieran and Shaun, whose thoughts and comments I valued greatly as I responded to God's call.

I began my studies for the priesthood at the Pontifical Beda College, a seminary for late vocations to the priesthood, under the care of the Bishops of England and Wales. My time in Rome lasted four years, and throughout the course of my studies I met many wonderful people, and developed a strong bond with my fellow students, now priests, who are ministering all around the world.

I was ordained a priest by Bishop Luc Matthys on the 16th July 2010 (Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel) in St Nicholas Catholic Church East Tamworth. My father Leo McHugh was present, along with my five siblings and many cousins, friends and parishioners. My in-laws Bill and Dorrie Williams of Brisbane were unable to attend because of illness.

A very special moment in the Ordination Mass was when David, Kieran and Shaun placed on me the stole and chasuble with large blue and white Lilies embroidered on the front and back; identical to the Lillies that were placed on Julie's coffin. Following my ordination I spent time in Inverell and South Tamworth, before being appointed Parish Priest of St Joseph's Gunnedah in 2012. I had eight wonderful years in that role as well as being appointed Administrator of Sacred Heart Boggabri.

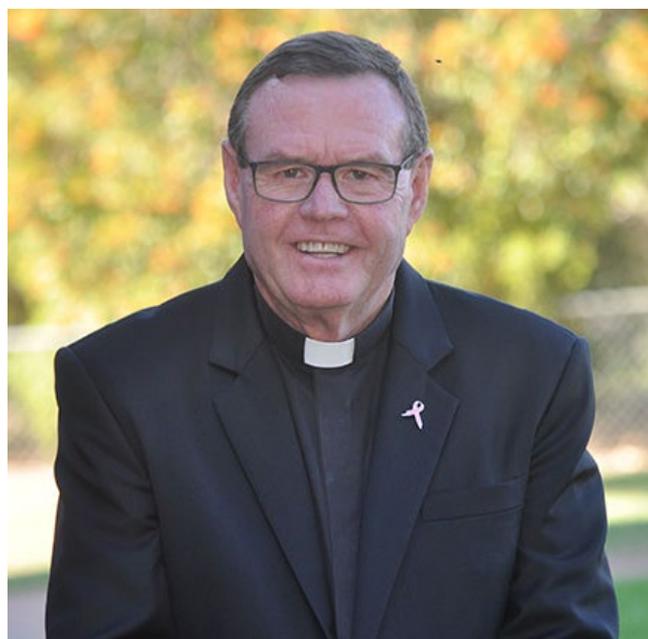
I stepped down from parish responsibilities at the end of 2020 following a serious illness, and I now have taken on the role as Supply Priest for the Diocese.

Since my ordination I have attended two weddings as 'dad' when in 2015 Kieran married Alanna Edwards at St Mary's Goondiwindi, they now have three children, Jock (5) Walker (4) and Primrose Julie Ann, (2) who all live on a property north of Coonamble. Shaun married Gemma Maddigan at St Vincent's Potts Point, in 2019 and they have a little baby boy Arthur McHugh, they live

in Dubbo. David McHugh and his partner, Madelyn Frankel live in Brisbane.

**"I AM CONSCIOUS OF THE MANY BLESSINGS GOD HAS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE, AS A HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER AND NOW, PRIEST."**

I am conscious of the many blessings God has generously provided throughout my life, as a husband, father, grandfather and now, priest. I am also aware that I have a beautiful advocate looking after me from heaven, Julie, a woman of deep faith and a beautiful wife and mother. My second vocation as a priest has never diminished my first vocation as a husband, father and grand-father, the two vocations have enriched my life and have given me a greater understanding of the challenges and the joys that we all encounter in living this earthly life.



*Father John McHugh*

# IMPORTANT DATES

**1 19TH OCTOBER**  
Communio for Priests less than five years in the Diocese.\*

**2 21ST - 25TH NOVEMBER**  
Clergy Retreat.\*

\*Please note all upcoming events are pending Covid Restrictions and could be cancelled or postponed.

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE CORONAVIRUS UPDATE - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2021

The announcement on the 9th September that lockdown has been lifted in parts of regional NSW applies to all local government areas which have seen zero COVID19 cases for at least 14 days. This currently applies to all LGA's in our Diocese except Walgett & Glen Innes where stay at home orders remain and/or have been put back in place.

To clarify, the ongoing restrictions which will apply are:

- Up to 5 visitors will be allowed in a home
- Up to 20 people can gather in an outdoor setting
- Schools will reopen with Level 3 COVIDSafe measures in place
- Up to 50 guests can attend weddings
- Up to 50 mourners can attend funerals
- Churches can open subject to the one person per 4 square metre rule with no singing. Please review your church capacity and arrange additional Masses if you think this is required to allow all parishioners who wish to come to Mass to do so.
- Masks remain mandatory for all indoor public venues including churches and you must still have the QR code sign in facility.



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