



Deacon John McClelland, a native of Newry, and Deacon Michael Rooney, of Ballela, were ordained as Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Dromore in Saint Patrick and Saint Colman's Cathedral, Newry, on Pentecost Sunday, 4 June 2017

Bishop John McAreevey, Bishop of Dromore was principal celebrant at the ceremony which welcomed the first ever Permanent Deacons ordained in Newry Parish.

Deacon McClelland formerly spent 32 years with the Fire and Rescue Service and also worked with the Orana Children and Family Centre in Newry. He was joined at the ordination by his wife, Mary, and two daughters, Paula and Caroline, as well as grandchildren, and many other family members. He will serve as permanent deacon in Newry Parish.

Deacon Rooney founded a genealogical research business, and with his wife, Jill, established an educational support organisation for children in Craigavon. His wife and four sons, Edward, Arthur, Laurence and John as well as his parents and extended family circle joined him on the day.

In their journey, the two men have undertaken a four-year formation programme. The deacons can now perform various ministries in the Church including preaching at Mass, celebrating baptisms and funerals as well as undertaking a particular responsibility for works of charity.

Speaking about the ordinations, Canon Francis Brown, parish administrator, said, "We the priests and deacons of the diocese are very pleased to have two new deacons join us to give generously of their time and talents in the service of the people of the diocese. The ordinations this afternoon are the culmination of four years' preparation. Our prayer this afternoon is that you will by the example of your lives, inspire those whom you serve to follow Christ more closely and bring comfort and healing to many people by what you say and what you do and encourage others to follow in your footsteps."

The areas of ministry entrusted to Permanent Deacons fall under three general headings, Altar, Word and Charity. Deacons can assist the priest at the celebration of the Eucharist; they can celebrate baptism and marriage and preside at funerals. They also facilitate visiting the sick,

prisoners and the bereaved and promoting awareness of the social teaching of the church.

In partnership with priests and parish pastoral workers, their role includes supporting the structures which allow for the wider participation of the lay faithful in a range of ministries in the parish and in the wider community.

The Permanent Diaconate is a voluntary part-time ministry, for married or single men, however if deacons have taken early retirement or reduced their work commitments they may be able to offer a greater time commitment.

Pictures from the ordination can be found on www.newrycathedralparish.org .