

Deacon's first novel tells table's timeless story

By **Ambria Hammel** - Jul 17, 2017

So far, Dcn. Dennis Lambert is fulfilling his plans for retirement.

They weren't by any means vast or deep. Dcn. Lambert simply sought more time to serve the Church. Additional time to write, even though he wasn't an English major, was a side benefit. At 55, just two years into retirement, the Lord has provided.

[En Route Books and Media](#), a small Catholic publishing company based in St. Louis, released the deacon's first book, "The Table" in June and the words are flowing for additional works of Catholic fiction. Words are also flowing at church as the deacon continues regular parish duties. He was reassigned from St. Timothy in Mesa earlier this year to Corpus Christi to fill a great need at the Ahwatukee parish.

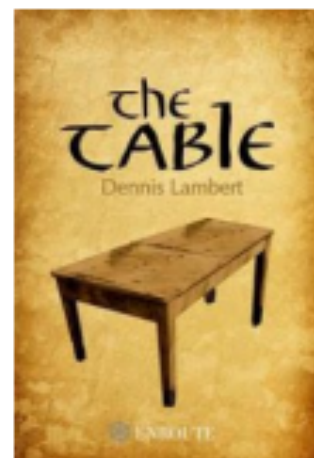
Either role has Dcn. Lambert constantly contemplating the faith and people in its history. That's how the idea for "The Table" developed. He was infatuated with the centurion story from the Bible, particularly the one who says his servant is ill and, rather than welcome Jesus into his presumably messy abode, proclaims his faith in the Lord, "only say the word and my servant will be healed."

Author: Dcn. Dennis Lambert

Publisher: En Route Books and Media

Length: 360 pages

Website: enroutebooksandmedia.com



"I always thought, 'What happened to that guy after the fact?'"
Dcn. Lambert said.

"The Table" isn't specifically a story about that centurion — remember the deacon's book is a work of fiction — but it is about a centurion who, following the death of Jesus, becomes the table-bearer. The actual piece of furniture was built by Jesus' earthly grandfather, provided space for a play fort for the once tot-sized True Vine, added to the ambience at the wedding in

Cana — the bride's father was once the table-bearer's best customer — and more. Peace comes to those who encounter the table.

Jump ahead a good 20 centuries when the modern-day table-bearer is an autistic young man. The rest of the story involves him, a musician and the timeless story of faith. Dcn. Lambert, who himself spent years playing bass for churches in Chicago and Mesa, actually wrote the first chapter a year or so before his ordination and in spurts after that.

Words for the final chapters flowed in retirement. Offers from publishing companies, however, did not.

"I had a publisher that offered me something that last week if I took everything out of it that was Catholic," Dcn. Lambert said.



Dcn. Dennis Lambert has only written one book so far with plans to publish more. Follow him at <https://dennislambert-writer.com/>

The deacon, who is also a father of two and a newly crowned grandfather, was unwilling to adjust the story setting and characters. He wrote it with Catholics in mind, particularly those high school age and beyond looking to be inspired by a fictional story from a Catholic point of view. His perseverance paid off when he received three "yes" offers from as many publishers in the same week.

Catholic fiction, in general, isn't a genre authors often choose. Ignatius Press only has 73 Catholic fiction titles listed online. Loyola Press lists a fraction of that. En Route Books and Media, which published "The Table" and donates 10 percent of profits to pro-life causes, almost has a dozen fiction titles listed online — the majority aimed at younger Catholic readers. That's the target audience the Phoenix deacon has in mind next.

"Now I have a toe, or at least a little toe in these waters," Dcn. Lambert quipped.

He'd like to publish some smaller stories for middle schoolers he wrote in the past. They center around Pritchard the Elf with a priest, prayer and moral elements part of the plot. Dcn. Lambert is now working on a World War II-era story from the point of view of a concentration camp worker who wants to save the Jewish people.