

DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

We thank God today for the diaconal ordination of these four young men, full of enthusiasm: Kim Cabatana, Gregory Cooke, Tom Jose and Martin McElroy. We offer our prayers and congratulations to them, to their wives (Jeanneth, Akiko, Rejimol and Jeanine) and to their families and friends. They will serve in parishes in Havant, Boscombe, Southampton and Winchester. It's been a long journey to this day, but as the Psalm said: *At night there are tears but joy comes with dawn*. Today God gives us much joy. He has been at work all their lives long, leading them to give themselves now as deacons. We are grateful to their formators, to Fr. Peter Hart and his team, and to Oscott College. What from all eternity God has planned, today comes to fruition.

Let me say a word about the Readings we have just heard for this 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year. They are all about death - or rather Christ's victory over death. Contemporary culture finds death taboo, an impossible topic. To think of one's death is fearsome. Yet as the author of the Book of Wisdom said: *Death was not God's doing; He takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living. It was the devil's envy that brought death into the world*. God made Adam and Eve immortal; it was their Original Sin that generated death, damaging creation like dirt muddying pure water. Death now forms what Martin Heidegger calls, the horizon to life; it gives life urgency. But thanks be to God for the amazingly Good News of Christ! By dying Jesus Christ has destroyed our death and by rising restored our life. This is why the sick went to Jesus for healing, like the synagogue official's daughter in the Gospel. It's always a profound sadness for us to lose a loved one. Yet by His victory, Christ has made the impossible possible. He has opened the way. Hear again His words: *Do not be afraid; only have faith*.

Kim, Gregory, Tom and Martin, you are the bearers of this amazingly Good News to the people of our times. They badly need to hear it; they badly need hope, meaning and purpose in life; they badly need to know for sure there is a God and that He is a loving Father, Who is on their side and Who wishes to save them from sin, suffering and death. As a deacon, you'll have your work cut out! For a deacon sacramentally re-presents Christ the Servant. He is a minister of the altar, a minister of the Word, and a minister of charity especially to the poor, the sick, the lonely, the needy. This is what you commit yourselves to now: that you are willing to be ordained, that you will lovingly serve the Church, that you will faithfully teach the Catholic Faith, that you promise to be men of prayer and that from this day forward you will zealously model your life on Christ. Today's Gospel about the woman with a haemorrhage drawing near to Jesus to draw power from Him, is a perfect lesson for us. It's like an image for the spiritual life: *If I can touch even His clothes, I shall be well again*. So draw near to Jesus every day. Touch Him in daily Mass and spend an hour in Eucharistic Adoration. Imbibe the Word of God from Scripture, Tradition and the Church's teaching. And be holy; selflessly seek to model your life and life-style on Christ.

*I will praise you Lord; you have rescued me. I will thank you for ever*. In this Mass, in which you receive the Sacrament of Holy Order, we pray for you, calling on the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary. May God bless you. May He fill you with the Love of Christ. May He enrich you with His Holy Spirit. May you persevere and one day come to the joys of heaven.