

Diaconal Ordination, Bobby Taylor & Martin Eckersley

St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh

Saturday 01 August 2020

Homily of Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A warm welcome to all of you who have come from near and far for the Ordination to the Diaconate of Bobby and Martin.

As you know already, we have twice had to postpone and limit our celebrations in a way that would not be out of place in times of war or pestilence, but as I had the occasion to remark at a priestly ordination last week, these circumstances unexpectedly help us to concentrate upon what really matters. I know that Bobby and Martin are both happy simply to be getting ordained, after all the recent confusion. Thank you to all of you for your patience in waiting for this day, and to all in Mgr Burke's staff at the Cathedral who have done their utmost to make this celebration a worthy one.

My dear sons, you are now to be raised to the Order of Deacons. For you this is a step towards the sacred priesthood, but it is nonetheless in itself a valuable time for you in the *cursus* of Holy Orders. For you it is an entrance, a starting point, through the gift of yourselves today, into a deeper understanding of the meaning of service in the Church, and into the essential spirit of obedience that comes with the clerical state before, in due course, you are more perfectly conformed to Christ crucified in the sacred priesthood.

As deacons, you will focus upon modelling yourself upon Christ the Deacon, *diakonos* and *doulos*, slave of all and servant of all. All clerics, but deacons in particular, are slaves of all and servants of all, in the liturgy and in life.

You will be the first to serve and the last to *be* served at the Eucharistic table. This mirrors perfectly both Christ's emptying of himself at the

service of us all, and the role that is shortly to be conferred on you. You are to love obedience and find opportunities to put yourselves at the disposal of your superiors. You are to be servants of the bishop's will for you, and above all of Christ's poor, wherever they are, and in whatever circumstances. Whether the poverty is material, human, or spiritual, be prompt in your willingness to assist them.

Deacons are also heralds and ambassadors. You will learn to represent worthily and to speak for Another, and to do so in all gentleness, truth and charity. The living Word of God is to be your Master now, and so you are to be charged with proclaiming that Word authentically, in season and out of season. But the Word of God is also a gentle breeze, and the face of God, revealed in His Word Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is a face of love and of mercy, of tenderness and compassion. The preaching of the Word that you will perfect during your time as deacons is also an opportunity to learn to spread the Gospel with preparation and skill, with loving words, and with charitable gestures.

The school of the diaconate, therefore, is a wonderful opportunity to deepen your commitment to Christ and the Church. It will help you to draw closer to Christ, to imitate His service of His Father, to imitate His words and actions, and to understand and perfect in your hearts your own gift of self in imitation of Him.

Finally, always live and act in a way that is worthy of the gift that is bestowed on you today. Live up to the solemn promises that you will make before me and this assembly today. And wherever your time as a deacon takes you, may God bless both of you abundantly.