

# **Priestly Ordination of Br Sam Burke OP**

**St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh, 25 July, 2020**

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## **Homily of Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A very warm welcome to all of you who have come from near and far for the Ordination to the Priesthood of your relative and friend, Brother Samuel Burke, of the Order of Preachers.

The unusual circumstances in which we live at the moment have intruded upon our preparations, and I regret that we have had to limit or postpone, sometimes drastically, the more pleasant elements that accompany an ordination. Those missing elements notwithstanding – more solemn rites, more beautiful music that we are capable of here, a pressing throng of well-wishers that would surely be here, the congratulations, even the receptions – these strange times help us, as few other things might, to appreciate the things that really matter: the importance of our faith, of the preaching of the Word, of the Mass and the Sacraments – and, at their centre here today, the sacred priesthood.

If we pause to reflect upon it, these times have helped us to perceive afresh something eternal, something beautiful, something very close to our hearts in what we do here today.

As a Dominican Friar, Sam, you have already given your life and your obedience to an Order that is distinguished for its pursuit of truth, its attachment to simplicity of life, and the preaching of the Word. It is a noble thing that you have already embraced, and I salute you and your brethren for what you do now and what your brethren have done from the remotest times in this city and in this diocese to promote our faith in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, today you offer yourself for ordination to the priesthood. You have been prepared intellectually, humanly and spiritually over recent years by your brother Friars, and by the gentle influence of your family and friends. Some of them are present here, although not in the numbers that would have been here in other circumstances. Together, they speak of all that you bring to your consecration to the Lord today.

In the sacred priesthood, what the Church now asks of you is to conform yourself more perfectly to Christ, and Him crucified. We are priests, never for our ourselves, but for Christ and His People. Through imitating Him and His loving offering of Himself on Calvary, priests model themselves on the sacrifice

at the very centre of our salvation, our ministry, and our lives. Our priesthood is more important than anything else we possess, and it is only ours, because it has been granted to us graciously by the Lord.

This gift, we will now entrust to you today. You will remain an earthen vessel, imperfect and unworthy, but what you lack, make up for with a humble willingness to learn, to grow, and to embrace for the glory of God whatever is asked of you.

Offer, therefore, what you bring here today with a full heart and a spirit of love, humility, and gratitude for all God's gifts to you. Place your hand on this plough with the gift of yourself, and in a charity that embraces all.

May this new commission from the Church that priestly ordination represents, be for you a task that is joyful and a burden that is light. Let it conform you to Christ our great High Priest, the One who reveals to us the merciful face of God, and whose love and mercy we wish to share with humanity.

Finally, Sam, always live and act in a way that is worthy of the great gift that is bestowed on you today. And wherever your priesthood takes you, may God bless you abundantly.