



**Ordination to the Priesthood  
Rev Deacon Jason Yeap and Rev Deacon Errol Lobo**

**Homily**

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth**

**Friday, 19 April, 2024  
St Mary's Cathedral, Perth**

As we gather here in the Cathedral this evening for this wonderful celebration of the ordination of these two fine young men, Errol and Jason, to the priesthood, I would like to put to all of you here tonight a question which mirrors one which Jesus Himself once put to a gathering of people who had come to listen to his teaching.

The question was prompted by some of the disciples of John the Baptist who had sent his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if he was the one for whom everyone had been waiting or if they should instead be waiting for someone else. After suggesting to John's disciples that they go back to John and tell him what they had seen and heard – that the blind see again, that the lame walk, that lepers are cured, deaf people hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is preached to the poor - Jesus then turned to the crowd and, in reference to John the Baptist who had lived out in the desert wilderness, asked the crowds, *“What did you go out into the desert to see? Did you go to see a reed swaying in the wind - a man who had no solid convictions? Or did you, perhaps, go out into the desert to see a man dressed in fine clothes?”*. *“Surely”*, said Jesus, *“you went out to see a prophet and, indeed, you saw someone who was more than a prophet: you saw someone who was preparing the way for the Lord”* (cf Matthew 11:1-10).

Tonight, I want to put a similar question to all of you - to all of us. What have we come here tonight to see? Certainly, not two men who do not have the courage of their convictions or whose opinions and beliefs change with the wind. And certainly not, I hope, two men dressed in fine clothes, even if tonight they will, for a short time, be dressed in sacred vestments.

Surely tonight you have come - we all have come - to see two men of great generosity, deep faith and courageous hope, who are ready to offer all that they have and all that they are to God and to God's Church; which is to say, of course, to God's holy people - to us.

Tonight we have come to see, and rejoice with, these two men, Errol and Jason, as they commit themselves to being exactly what we all need them to be - men whose words and whose lives, like John the Baptist, speak to us of God, draw us closer to God, and remind us of the central



place which God seeks to have in our lives, and which we need God to have in our lives. And why - why do we need them to be all this for us? So that we, the Holy People of God, can be a community whose words and whose lives speak of God and who make clear to everyone we encounter that only in God will we, and they, and our society, find the balance and the peace and the joy for which we all are searching.

In this sense, then, Errol and Jason will tonight become, in all the reality of their gifted and yet fragile humanity, living signs - we might almost say living sacraments – pointing us to the presence of the Lord Jesus who continues to say to us, as he did to his first disciples, *“Come to me if you labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls”* (Matt 11:28-30). In this way, these two young men will imitate John the Baptist to whom I referred at the beginning of these reflections. He knew that it was not his role to draw people to himself but rather to point them beyond himself to the Lamb of God. He knew, too, that for this to happen he must grow smaller so that the Lord Jesus might grow greater in people’s lives. Tonight, Jason and Errol take on this awesome responsibility and this daunting challenge.

We know, of course, that they do not do this alone, for the words of Jesus, once addressed to the disciples caught in the storm, are tonight addressed to them: *“Do not be afraid, I am with you”*. We know, too, that they are, as we all are, *“anointed with the Holy Spirit and with Power”* (Acts 10:38). Tonight, that anointing and that empowerment will take on a new and deeper meaning as they are drawn into the mystery of the ordained ministry of the Church as priests. And we know and believe that tonight, in a new and deeper way, they will be numbered among those for whom the Lord Jesus prayed this prayer: *Holy Father, I have made your name known to those you took from the world to give to me ... they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world ... consecrate them in the truth – for just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world* (Jn 17:19).

Here, in fact, is the key to Errol and Jason’s priestly life and ministry: they are being sent out into the world, into our world, into this world of 2024 and beyond, just as Jesus was sent into the world by His Father. He, Jesus, was sent, to use the beautiful words of Pope Francis, to be the face of the Father’s mercy, and from tonight, as ordained priests in the Lord’s Church, Jason and Errol must make it their aim every day to reveal the merciful face of God to us. He, Jesus, was sent to be a good shepherd to His people even to the point of giving His life, and from tonight, Errol and Jason must strive to keep the Lord’s flock together, to protect us from danger, and to lead us, even if necessary, through the valley of death, to safe pastures. He, Jesus, was sent to bring sight to the blind and freedom to prisoners, and from tonight, Errol and Jason will seek to bring light into the darkness of people’s minds and hearts and lead them to the Lord who alone can set them free.



And He, Jesus, was sent to draw all people to Himself so that they, with Him, might be in communion with His heavenly Father, forming a community of brothers and sisters in Christ. It was for this that Jesus gave His life, and it is for this that Errol and Jason tonight commit themselves as they respond to the Lord's call to follow Him as sharers in the Church's ordained ministry. *This is my body, given for you – this is my blood, poured out for you – do this in memory of me.* Every time Errol and Jason celebrate the Eucharist with and for us, their people, they will do so in remembrance of Jesus. And every time they live what they celebrate, making of their lives a generous and total gift for our sake, they will do so in remembrance of Jesus. We will see him in them, and be reminded that, in the words of Saint Augustine, God has made us for Himself and our hearts will always be restless until they rest in Him.

We pray tonight that Errol and Jason will be faithful to all that God is asking of them, and we pray, too, that we will be faithful to them, supporting them with our prayers, with our encouragement, with our understanding, with our forgiveness when it is needed, and with our love.