



Ordination to the Diaconate

Max Kenneth Acosta Garcia and Patricio Carrera Morales

Homily

**By the Most Rev Don Sproxton
Auxiliary Bishop of Perth**

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth
Friday, 31 March 2017

Everyone here this evening shares in the joy that Kenneth and Patricio feel as they presented themselves for ordination to the diaconate. For them, it has been a long journey of discernment from the time they felt the call of Christ to test their vocation to the priesthood.

Some of those who have been involved in this discernment are present with us this evening, from the seminary staff and the families with whom they have lived and shared in ministry. On behalf of the many people who have observed their progress in the life of the Spirit, Kenneth and Patricio have been presented and elected to be ordained for the diaconate.

Our celebration of the liturgy will be very joyful, even though we are still in the solemn season of Lent and grace.

The ministry that Kenneth and Patricio will be entrusted with is conferred by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The diaconate is essentially the ministry of putting oneself freely and willingly at the service of others, living no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for them.

How beautiful it is that the first and foundational Holy Order is defined by service.

When we see someone who is a deacon, priest or bishop sacrificing his own comfort and time to be there for others in their needs, we recognise that here is a disciple of Christ. The same is said of couples in marriage as they serve in love their spouses, children and the community at large.

The foundation vocation of loving service comes from Jesus and when we are able to become servants to others, we know real joy and we become a presence of Christ to our generation.

The call to freely and willingly serve requires faith and deep trust in Christ. The gift of joy like that we experience this evening, will be renewed for Kenneth and Patricio when in serving they come to know the depth of their faith and trust in Christ. They will feel as if they are on solid ground, with nothing to fear.

The Book of Wisdom announced something very important for all of us. We heard about the person who is convinced that he is one of the elect, chosen people of God. We heard as well of the general challenges that the elect of God face by their contemporaries. Their faith in God is



ridiculed and they find that they are restricted in expressing their views, especially their views about God and their experience of God's activity in their lives, which were illuminated by the Word of God.

Just before the coming of Jesus, there was growing prejudice against the Jews because of their claims that they had knowledge of God. The prevailing culture, the Greek culture, considered these claims to be pretentious. How could such a backward, uneducated people have anything to say about God? The faithful Jew experienced similar ridicule from his own.

The experiences of the Jews, written in Alexandria in Egypt, have become the Book of Wisdom, and foreshadowed, quite astonishingly, the life of Jesus. He was to be rejected, his message of hope dismissed and measures taken to destroy all trace and memory of him.

In the estimation of his own people, Jesus was of the common people, uneducated in the technical knowledge of the scriptures and unskilled in the Law. In reality, the Pharisees could not join Jesus on the level of faith and knowledge of God he displayed in the Word of God. How could they be: Jesus is the Word of God, the living Word. The Word of God is a person and can be encountered directly from living.

The Gospel for this day of Lent helps us to understand the difference and authority of Jesus' teaching. John says that Jesus cried out. You do not cry out when giving some academic explanation of a scriptural text. In crying out, Jesus is proclaiming the truth as a prophet would, with an authority that he possessed because of his communion with his Father.

The deacon has many duties of service to the Christian community. Foremost is the ministry of the Word. This ministry is described by the Church as being as much a ministry of service as is the ministry of charity.

Kenneth and Patricio, you have been schooled in the ministry of the Word through learning how to hear the Father speaking to you in your experiences of life. The scriptures have shown how your experiences of the ways of God are paralleled in the life of Jesus. This has built your hope: it has been the reason for your hope.

It is the knowledge of God that, if you are prepared to share it with others, can give hope to the people who are living without hope. The culture within which the People of God journeys today has many good things, but there are disturbing elements that threaten the human spirit truly flourishing. The ministry of the Word, especially proclaimed by your living with and in Christ, will be the most effective means of renewing hope in the hearts of the people you are called to serve.

So, Kenneth and Patricio, do not be afraid: have courage. Be the voice of Christ for people who have lost sight of God and goodness.

Let your ministry in preaching, celebrating Baptisms and Marriages be further ways in which you seek to serve to the very best of your abilities.

May you be ready to be with the people in their final hours of struggle in dying, by bringing to them Viaticum and the comfort of your presence.



Pray for the grace to bring words of hope to those who grieve the passing of a loved one when celebrating the Christian funeral rites.

Remember, the Risen Lord goes before you and accompanies you in the ministry of loving service, the diaconate.