



**Ordination to the Diaconate (Mark Rucci)
Homily**

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

St Benedicts Church, Applecross
Friday 20 October, 2017

I note that our candidate is named Mark Anthony! The original Roman had a very mixed career. However, I am sure that our Mark was named after two great saints by his parents. He shares in the journey of faith more closely to them.

This evening Mark reaches a point in his journey when he will be blessed, after his years of formation and discernment in the seminary, and after many years of listening to and struggling with the call of Christ for many years before that.

The blessing for him today, as he presents himself for ordination, will be that the Holy Spirit will provide the strength of faith and trust Mark will need to be a minister of service to the people. The diaconate is the first of the Holy Orders and it is so appropriate that it is a ministry of service, and that service is the basis of all ministry in the Church, especially the ministries of Orders. When God calls there always follows his promise of grace and support. This is the blessing for Mark.

St Paul would affirm all of this. He was called to be an apostle, but not when the other apostles received their call. His call came later. He could testify, though, that the grace of Christ accompanied him, as much as with any other servant of the Gospel, throughout his years of missionary service.

This evening we heard a short excerpt from his letter to the Ephesians. It contained the call to unity. We believe that Paul spent quite some time at Ephesus, maybe as long as two years. By the time he left, there were about twenty or so who had become Christian. He felt very close to this little church and his letter shows his deep concern for them.

Paul wrote to them with a caution. He knew that there were three things that threaten the unity of a Christian community: arguments between the members of church, the growing diversity of the ministries in the community, and the teaching of false doctrine. He sought to bring the Ephesians to the view that all of these threats could be resolved by the community remembering that all is done in Christ. Christ has to be the principle of unity. The ministries especially will be a unity of Christian endeavour if all involved acknowledge that they come from Christ as a gift.

Mark is be called to the diaconate, to serve as Jesus did, and in serving to be a blessing to the Church here in the Archdiocese. He must never hear himself say: this is my ministry. None of us who have been called to Sacred Orders should say this. As a deacon, and please God, later as a priest, Mark needs to follow the caution of Paul, in that the ministry belongs to Christ. We are invited to minister to all of our brothers and sisters in his name, on his behalf.



I now call Mark to come forward to receive the gift of diaconate, to be given to him by Christ, for the benefit of the People of God.