



**Ordination to the Diaconate
Br Chris de Sousa**

Homily

**By the Most Rev Donald Sproxton DD
Auxiliary Bishop of Perth**

St Jerome's Church, Spearwood
Saturday 3 November, 2018

This is a very, very happy day for the Somascan Fathers and also for the Archdiocese of Perth. Whenever we have the ordination of a man – to diaconate, to priesthood, even to the ministry of bishop – it is a joyous occasion because it means that along his journey of faith, this person has grown in his understanding of God and of Jesus. He grows in the understanding of what it means to be called by God, through baptism fundamentally, to become a disciple of Jesus.

Men, who are prepared for ordination, having that foundational call from God in baptism, experience that further call by the Lord through the Sacraments. Most in the Church, of course, are called to the Sacrament of Marriage. Both the Sacrament of Marriage and the Sacrament of Holy Orders are taught as being Sacraments of Service and of Mission. So beginning with that foundational call that we be disciples of Jesus, there is then a further call to serve the community in these two Sacraments.

What we have today is yet another man who, after many years of discernment, and with the direction of those responsible for his formation – including the people of this parish and other parish communities, presented for ordained ministry. The People of God are saying: "Yes, we believe this man shows that he has the capacity to live his life as a servant to the community". In other words, to be able to provide for us what we need as a Christian community for our journey of faith.

That, I guess, is the most important function of the priesthood. The most important function of those three levels of Holy Orders, beginning with the Diaconate, that we are called fundamentally to be servants of the community. The first way in which we serve the community is by being ready to respond to the needs that arise in the community. The second is to be ministers of the Word, to be proclaimers of the Good News in our preaching. And then thirdly, it is to build up the community through the celebration of the Sacraments, providing the grace of Jesus Christ through these Sacraments to our community.

These are the ways in which the deacon, the priest, and the bishop were given a call by the Lord to be servants – to serve in the community in these ways. The diaconate is the first of those ordinations, and it is in the diaconate that we are taught by Jesus Christ what is the foundation of all of the other Orders.

The foundation is humility, humble service, and that comes out of the desire that we have to become all the more a true image of Christ to our people. To become icons of Jesus, because



we are gradually conformed to His image, so that when people encounter us in our roles of service, they may encounter someone who is a humble man, who lives simply, who makes himself available to the people at any hour.

So today, as we reflect on this wonderful occasion and this call that Chris has responded to so generously, and we ask that the Lord will show to us in Chris the image of Jesus Himself. He came to be a servant and not to be the king; he came in order to serve the people who are gathered around the table of the Lord – that is us. We are gathered around this table of the Lord at this very moment, preparing ourselves to receive the Lord in Holy Communion, to be refreshed and nourished by the Lord who comes to us, to have our spirit strengthened with the grace of the Lord again, powerfully present within us.

You are the ones, the disciples of Jesus, gathered around the table: the deacon, the priest, the bishop is here to serve you at this table. Let that be what we experience in this ministry that Chris begins today as a deacon. Let us see within him that presence of the Lord who comes to serve.