



**Ordination to the Diaconate
Grzegorz Rapcewicz**

Homily

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

**St Mary's Cathedral, Perth
Thursday 12 August, 2021**

The ordination of a new deacon is truly a reason for rejoicing. The Archdiocese receives the gift of yet another person who has heard the call of God and generously responded, and was then chosen to begin a journey to test this call and be formed for service in the Church.

In many ways, the journeys that we take because of our faith resemble one another. Elements of the great journey of Exodus can be found in those pathways in our lives. At times we are led by a cloud, at other times by a pillar of fire. Sometimes things are concealed and gradually revealed. Sometimes things are clear, like a flaming light in the night. In each, the Spirit of God is present and we learn to discern that presence and the way to go as we follow the Spirit.

Grzegorz began the journey in Poland which has led him here to be ordained this evening. The pathway was opened in much the same way as the Red Sea was opened. He was safely conducted through a passage from his former life into his community back home. He began walking without knowing where it would lead.

It would be a long, liberating trial. A work of the Holy Spirit began, which purified him and a promised made him that he would grow in his capacity to love.

And he trusted that what had brought him freedom in those early days would be renewed whenever he needed it. His journey with his community, the seminary and communities here, has been in stages, through the thresholds of scrutinies, and the experiences in the ministry he has exercised already. Each of these were to be new experiences of Pascal liberation, of being set free from slaveries of one kind or another.

The Israelites completed their Exodus stage of their journey and finally crossed through the waters of the Jordan to begin their mission in their Promised Land. So it was not the end of their story. The next part of their story began.



For Grzegorz, the journey continues through the passage of this ordination to his mission. His mission is to serve the People of God in this Church of Perth. Maybe he will later be sent to other churches as a gift from Perth to serve with a love for those people.

How will he serve?

He will serve by being a sign to others that the power of the Spirit can help us to conform to Christ. His personal witness to the presence of the Spirit in his life is needed for the people of our day to hear.

He will serve by announcing the Good News. Good News is needed by us all, such as we heard in the Gospel just now. The sin of the rejection and removal of God from our lives is the greatest offence, yet it is freely pardoned by God, so that we are given the chance to be converted and transformed by the Spirit of the living Christ through life. This is Good News. We are never abandoned by God.

One forgives as one is forgiven: one pities a brother or sister because one has been pitied oneself. There is a great disproportion between the pardon and freedom offered by God and what we are called to pardon among ourselves. When we realise this, we have the reason to work with the Spirit to be forgiving ourselves.

The deacon serves God's people by offering the ministry of the Word and assisting at the Altar. The deacon serves through the ministry of Charity, in the name of the Bishop. The deacon serves by presiding over the Prayer of Church.

The deacon serves by presiding at Baptisms and Marriages, which are privileged occasions of joy for families.

The deacon serves the People of God in their times of sorrow and loss when he accompanies families and presides at funerals.

May the Spirit who has led Grzegorz to this ministry of service continue to grow in faith and be a missionary disciple of Christ. And may he be able to become for us all a model of Christian living that we will want to imitate.