

St Peter's Ealing
Sunday 30th June 2019
St Peter's Patronal Festival

'Here I am, send me'

This week I have had the honour and privilege of walking alongside eight men and women as they prepared for their ordination to the priesthood of the Church of England. With some of them I have had an even longer journey as I have been their Director of Ordinands. This week I lead the Willesden Area Ordination retreat.

For forty eight hours we were in each other's company; praying, eating and listening. They had to listen to my addresses and on Friday evening my sermon as I preached at the ordination service. I had the privilege of being allowed to hear parts of their story; to hear of their joys and woes; to hear their confessions and to give God's absolution.

It is no accident that ordinations to the priesthood and the diaconate take place in this season. Peter was called by God through Jesus to become a fisher of people. He along with the other disciples and apostles were commissioned to take the good news of Jesus Christ out into the world; in the words of Matthew, to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

It is telling of Peter's place and his connection to ministry, that it is he who declares Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

So these men and women have now committed themselves to this ministry and today, around the country, there are hundreds of men and women just like them presiding at the Eucharist for the first time. These clergy follow thousands who have gone before following in the footsteps of Peter and carrying with them the same charism of the Holy Spirit given to the apostles at Pentecost.

Paul points out something we easily miss on such occasions as these. That the gift of the Holy Spirit, the charism of living out the faith, vocation and ministry is not for a select few; that there are many vocations and callings that have a place, filling the vastness of God's ministry here on earth. Paul talks of preachers and teachers, prophets, speakers in tongues; interpreters and those who serve. His list is only restricted by his imagination in the context of Church life. In the letter to the Colossians Paul writes, "whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col 3.17)

"What ever you do..." As Christians baptised in the name of the triune God we are called to live as disciples of Jesus. We are encouraged to see that in whatever we do, day to day, we have a vocation to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, as Saviour of the World. We are called to live joyfully in the power and wonder of the Holy Spirit. This is all our calling, all our vocation, all our baptismal promises.

The absolute joy of being able to celebrate Pentecost here today is to be able to realise and hear this call of Jesus for each of us, without it being obviated by the ordination season. It is our story, our constant, our call to hear God's word for us; in hearing that call, to respond positively and to strive to live out our vocation day by day; whether it be in your present place of work, the call of your office or maybe to make a fresh, new response that says to God, "Here I am send me".