

We come now to the ceremony in which Cay will be ordained deacon. I invite you all to consider the mission he will have within the community of the Church.

As deacon, he will assist the bishops and priests in their ministries of service. He will be a minister of the word, of the altar, and of charity. As a minister of the altar, he will proclaim the Gospel and give the Lord's body and blood to the community of believers. It will also be his duty to bring God's word to believer and unbeliever alike, to preside over public prayer, to baptise, to assist at marriages and bless them, to give viaticum to the dying and to lead the rites of funerals. He will perform works of charity in the name of the Church. From the way he goes about these duties, may you recognise him as a disciple of Jesus.

Cay, you are now to be ordained as deacon. You are being called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who came to do the will of the heavenly Father. Do the will of God generously. Serve God and the people with all your heart.

Like those the apostles chose for works of charity, you should be a person of good reputation, filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Show that you are above every suspicion of blame, a true minister of Christ and of God's mysteries, planted firmly in the soil of faith. Never turn away from the hope that the Gospel offers. Now you must not only listen to God's word but also preach it. Show in action what you proclaim in your words.

You will fulfil your mission as a member of our diocesan community. May you serve with profound respect for the people of the diocese. Wherever you may be, may you cherish your local community and do all you can to build up the community in faith and hope and love.

Our first Scripture reading this morning was from the prophet Isaiah. When the prophet heard the voice of the Lord ask, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?" the prophet answered, "Here I am, send me." You too have heard the voice of God in your heart and you have said, "Here I am, send me." Today, the Lord will commission you to be his messenger.

The gospel text for this Mass told the story of Jesus calling Peter, James and John. When he called them, he said to them, "Do not be afraid." Jesus says the same to you. He pours out upon you the gift of the Holy Spirit to be with you and guide you. May you not be afraid. May you have confidence in Christ and in his Spirit.

In the ceremony this morning, I will lay my hands on you to ordain you as deacon and we will pray that you will be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve faithfully. Persevere in your service in good times and in bad. Like the apostles, be ready to suffer for the gospel, relying on the power of God. Like the apostles, be a herald of the gospel and teacher of faith. Proclaim the good news in simple words and a simple way of life.

May your ordination as deacon this morning deepen your sense of service. May you live as a true servant of your brothers and sisters. Then, when your journey on earth comes to an end and you meet the Lord face to face, may you hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord." May God be with you, Cay, in all you do.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR