

Your day starts much like any other.

You wake up at the usual time.

You eat the same breakfast as always.

You follow the familiar routine of getting ready.

It all seems normal – ordinary – predictable.

.

But *this* is going to be *no* regular day.

For this is the day – your life changes.

Maybe you're anticipating something new.

Or – perhaps you really have no inkling – of what lies ahead.

But by the time the sun sets – everything will be utterly transformed.

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We've all known days like that.

Sometimes that unanticipated change is dire and dreadful – as we're suddenly and shockingly confronted with illness – accident – tragedy – and loss.

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But at other times our lives are transformed by something wonderful ...

An un-looked-for – and yet beautiful – glorious blessing.

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For ...

This is the day you meet the person – with whom you're going to fall in love.

This is the day you begin the new job – and discover it's all you'd ever hoped for.

This is the day you find your dream home – in which you'll enjoy many years of happiness and peace.

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Or – for *you* – who’re about to be Ordained Deacon in a few minutes’ time ...

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But *this* is going to be *no* regular day.

For this is the day – your life changes.

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This is the day that ...

all those years of wrestling with whether God actually *is* calling you

all those endless discernment meetings with the Vocations Team

all those doctrine essays over which you’ve laboured for many hours

all those preparations of buying books – and robes – and clerical collars

...

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This is the day that all those things reach their fulfilment – as you finally begin that Ordained ministry – to which God has been calling you – for a long, long time.

. ♦ ❖ ♦ .

But – of course – this isn’t simply about new lives for *you* – who’re about to be ordained.

For *your* calling – as soon-to-be-Deacons – is to work with God – in transforming the lives of those in your care.

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In the ministry that lies ahead of you ...

You’ll encounter ... the sick – the suffering – the sorrowful.

You’ll find yourself among ... those who don’t believe – and those who don’t care.

You’ll meet those —

and this is one of the great privileges of ministry ...

You’ll meet those in every state and condition of life – from the cradle to the grave.

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And your calling is to bring the –
 life-changing good news –
 of God’s transforming love –
 into each and every situation.

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For that’s God’s purpose and plan ...
To change and renew and restore – the world.

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Indeed ... this was God’s plan from the foundation of the universe.
The wonderful poem – that opens the first book of the Bible – Genesis ...
That wonderful poem ...

tells us that God looked at the world – at *all* of creation – and:

“It was good.”

“It was good.”

“It was very good.”

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The word “good” – here – is the translation of a Hebrew word ... **tov**.
Now, **tov** means “good” in a very *specific* way.

It means:

everything just as it ought to be ...

everything – like Goldilocks’ porridge – just right.

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You might want to call this right-ness – “*righteousness*”.

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The sun and moon mark days and seasons.
Creation is rich, fruitful and abundant.

And people live ...

in harmony – with one another –
in harmony – with creation – and
in harmony – with God.

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But – of course – things didn't stay like that.

As a result of human arrogance – selfishness – short-sightedness ...

all this has been lost – and we live in a world that's
damaged – divided – and broken.

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We see this in human guilt and shame and fear.

We see it hatred, prejudice and discrimination.

We see it –

in the oppression and exploitation of the poor and vulnerable –
in the insatiable greed of unbridled consumer culture –
in the wanton destruction of our precious – yet fragile – planet – and
in the deliberate and wilful turning away from God.



Now God – the Creator – is not *un*-moved, *un*-bothered by all this.

Rather, God *cares* ... And God is determined to put things right again

...

To bring wholeness ...

To bring reconciliation ...

To make the world good – **to**v ...

Once more – the place it should be.

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So, God gave laws – sent prophets and teachers – to show us the way ...

and – when human beings stubbornly refused to listen –

God finally sent his Son – Jesus – to restore the world to a state
of goodness.

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And so – in his ministry – we read of Jesus putting right – making good – all
that he encounters – that's broken.

As Jesus says in today's Gospel reading – right at the beginning of his
ministry:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

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That – indeed – was Jesus' life's work ...

A life-changing – world-changing – work of –
renewal and restoration –
reconciliation and release.

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Then, finally and decisively – on the cross – and through his resurrection –

Jesus even repairs the chasm – between us flawed human beings –
and our heavenly Father ... so that we might enjoy a renewed
and reconciled relationship with God.

◆

Now – today – in our age – and in our communities – God calls people –
people like you – new Deacons –
to continue this work of making the world the place it should be ...
a place that's truly *good*.

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For our Christian faith isn't *simply* about holding certain beliefs –
or keeping the institution going –
or even turning up at church on a Sunday ...
important though all those things are.

Rather it's about nothing less than joining in with God's ambitious, far-
reaching plan to transform – and to renew – the world.

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So, what about me?

What about you?

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But *this* is going to be *no* regular day.

For this is the day – your life changes.

This is the day – Jesus arrives in your town.

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You've heard the rumours, of course ...

Rumours of how this amazing man restores broken lives – granting ...

to the blind – sight –

to the lepers – cleansing –

to the outcast – acceptance –

to the terrified – courage –

to the hungry – nourishment –

to the sinners – forgiveness – and

to those who believe – eternal life.

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You've heard stories of how this man's company is so irresistibly enjoyable – that people – literally walk away from successful careers simply to be with him.

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But all that seems like mere gossip and hearsay – fantasy and wishful thinking ...

until the moment Jesus stands in front of you asking:

“What is it you want me to do for you?”

And you find yourself acknowledging your struggles – your weaknesses – your inadequacies –

the faults and failings – you've been too ashamed to admit – even to yourself.

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And Jesus looks at you – and loves you – and stretches out his hand –

to heal and restore –

to forgive and transform you ...

so that this day – becomes the day that your life is changed forever.

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And maybe ... just maybe ...

This is the day, too – that Jesus calls to you:

“Follow me”

and you become part of God’s – Jesus-Christ-shaped plan to transform
– and to renew – the world.

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Your day starts much like any other.

But *this* is going to be *no* regular day.

For this is the day – your life changes.

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It’s the day you turn up at St Albans Cathedral for the Ordination of:

Ash, Mark, Charlie, Paul, Corniel, James, Nicolette

Kirsty, Laura, Simon, Jenna, Kate, Philip

.

For this day of Ordination becomes – for you –

perhaps much to your surprise –

the day when your eyes – and your heart – are opened ...

and you say “yes” to the life-changing work of transformation – that
God longs to do in *you* ...

A work of healing and restoration.

A work of mercy and forgiveness.

A work of love and acceptance.

A work of hope and joy.

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For this is the day that your life is renewed by God’s wonderful ...

un-looked-for – and yet beautiful – glorious blessing.

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And having been changed ... who knows?

This may be the day that God calls *you* – to join in the divine, far-reaching plan to transform – and to renew – the world.



There comes a day when life changes.

For those about to be ordained – that day is now.

And also – maybe for you – that day is now.

The Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull