



Homily given by Bishop Anthony Randazzo  
*Bishop of Broken Bay*

Ordination to the Diaconate - *Rogelio Delmonte*  
Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral - 7 October 2020

There are some very worrying developments in our global village. As Pope Francis reminds us in his Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, “we have seen, descending on our world, the dark shadows of neglect and violence in the service of petty interests of power, gain and division” (*Fratelli tutti* 72). Wars and conflicts, the rise of secularism and the decline in religion, the sexual revolution and the lack of morality, increasing violence and crime. We have global problems of famine and poverty, debt and disease, displaced and homeless people, asylum seekers and political refugees. We can take all this and more on our shoulders, including our own guilt and sin, and feel completely and utterly inadequate faced with the enormity of our personal, communal, ecclesial, national, and global challenges.

Given our situation, the words of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in today’s Gospel can seem rather unrealistic: “*Do not be afraid*”. Do we not have a reason to be afraid? Where are the signs of God’s Kingdom?

The feast that we celebrate today reminds us of our need for faith. Like us, Mary simply had the Word, the promise of God to rely on, yet she allowed this promise to mould and direct her life completely, because the word spoken by the Angel was no ordinary word, but rather the living and eternal Word, Jesus Christ our Lord and saviour. We too are like Mary, setting out on a faith-journey, knowing that only God can answer our deepest needs, yet unsure as to how this will happen. And so, at times we get discouraged and begin to doubt. However, today’s gospel reminds us to be like Mary - to be ready for action, alert, always watchful, not to be distracted from the goal to which our faith calls us.

Rogelio, what a wonderful feast day it is for you to be ordained to the responsibility of the diaconate. As a deacon of the Church, you too must live by faith in God’s promise that through His Son Jesus Christ, His Kingdom will come and that you, like Mary, will have a place in it. The Church has need of faith-filled messengers to announce the truth of the Gospel. She has even greater need of clergy who preach the Gospel of Joy in fidelity to the example of the Divine Master.

As a deacon, your principle mandate will be to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance, or fear. Again, Pope Francis reminds us, the joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded. (*cf. Evangelii Gaudium*, 23)

Your preaching must be faithful to the Scripture and to the Tradition. Your duty will be to teach solidly, faithfully, and without error the truth and the mystery of the Cross which are revealed completely in Christ Jesus Our Lord. The mystery of the Cross is at the centre of Jesus' *diakonia*: it is the great service that he renders to all of us by the sacrifice made when he lay down his life for others.

Roger, who you are as a deacon will be communicated in a variety of ways, but most distinctive will be your focus on the needs of others. You are called to exercise the ministries of Word, Sacrament, and Charity <sup>(cf *Ad Gentes*, 16)</sup> – zealously, graciously, and tenderly. Your diaconal ministry and mission will find its most significant expression in the way you live as a servant-leader in the community of the Church.

My sisters and brothers, the whole Church is called to be a servant-church, a diaconal church. In a particular way, our deacons are ordered to animate the Church's service. As they seek to preach and live the mystery of the Lord's cross, they sacramentalize the Church's service  
(cf. John Paul II, 19 Sep 1987)

Roger, being a deacon is not simply some activity to be completed, as if it were a work project. Through your sacred promises, made during the Rite of Ordination, you will become a deacon for life. That means that your fidelity is enduring and that you will never cease to offer yourself for the service of God's holy people. Yours is a call from God, discerned with the help of the Holy Spirit in the community of the Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that in offering service, we must set aside our own wishes and desires as well as all pursuit of power. The Holy Father underlines the truth that service always looks to the faces of the vulnerable... it "*touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, 'suffers' that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people*". <sup>(*Fratelli tutti* 115)</sup>

As a deacon, you will be truly at the service of the common good. By animating others, you will help them see the greatness that often lays hidden in the human person. Your ministry of service is not simply to do things for others. Embracing the truth of the Gospel and living life in the Spirit, your *diakonia* is to participate and activate the community of faith, alongside the bishop and his presbyters.

My sisters and brothers, we cannot forget that *diakonia* begins by being attentive to the Word of God, as Mary was attentive. It is also about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him <sup>(cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 14)</sup>. It is both contemplative and active.

As we now pray for this man Rogelio, our brother, may he become a sign of Christ's *diakonia* in the world. Pray that, like Mary, he will be faithful to his call from the Lord, so that Christ the Saviour will speak and act through him as he seeks to serve God's holy people as deacon.