



Petertide

Father Tom Cass was a bit of a legend in the north-east. A priest with a big heart and plenty of time for people and their welfare, he was well loved and respected. He had only one sermon for all who listened; whatever he said was rooted in the words: –

'God loves you just as you are. He loves you so much that he's not content to leave you where you are...'

God's love transforms us. Jesus loved Peter just as he was - a fisherman, impulsive by nature and vulnerable. Jesus called him to become a leader in the church and to spread the love of Christ.

At Petertide it is customary for the church to ordain new deacons and priests. They will hear the words from Isaiah 6 – the call of God: "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Many will earnestly and prayerfully echo the response: "Here I am, send me." It is a response which will take them into alien territory, feeling ill equipped and vulnerable, but with the spirit of God.

Our MU trustees have sent welcome cards and prayers to those being ordained in Newcastle Cathedral this year. Please hold them in your prayers.

Ordination is a life-changing journey. It begins with the knowledge and wonder that 'God loves you – just as you are!' But one of the purposes of ordination training is to equip you to move from 'just as you are' to 'becoming': to becoming what God calls you to be: to be willing to welcome the unknown challenges ahead.

This, of course, is not the preserve of those called to ordination; it is the calling of all the baptised – to become the person we were meant to be. It can only begin by accepting that we are loved unconditionally.

Only then are we free enough to embrace our vulnerability and make ourselves available to journey with God through the ever-changing landscape of life... and so discover our giftedness.

O thou who camest from above,
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for
thee; still let me guard the holy fire
and still stir up the gift in me.