

PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF FR DANIEL ETIENNE, 1ST JULY 2017

Votive Mass of the Precious Blood

(Hbs 9:11-15. John 19:31-37)



Daniel, you have chosen the Mass of the Most Precious Blood as the liturgical setting for your priestly ordination. In fact, you are being called from today on ward to embody in your own life as a priest the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection, and to proclaim and explain that mystery to the people you will minister to. In the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "*We preach Christ crucified*" (1Cor 1:23). The Son of God's love for his people knew no limits, even to the shedding of his blood on the cross, as the prayers and readings of this Mass make so clear. Through sharing in Christ's ministerial priesthood you will reflect his sacrificial love to those to whom he sends you. Like the young Isaiah long ago, in response to the Lord's query, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?*" You are replying "*Here am I! Send me*" (Is. 6:8).

A priest is a minister of the new covenant sealed in Christ's blood. What an awesome task and grave responsibility. Each time you offer Mass, Daniel, you will be recalling and making anew in the sacrament of the altar that new and final covenant made in the body and blood of Christ. You are being ordained today to offer the sacrifice of reconciliation on behalf of his people, to make their prayers and daily sacrifices part of his one supreme sacrifice to the Father. The Church needs your ministry; God's people awaits your ministry. Do remember, however, *that we carry this treasure in earthenware jars, to show that its surpassing power comes from God and not from ourselves* (cf. 2Cor 4:7).

The newly-ordained priest of the twenty-first century steps out into a world of many challenges to that faith which, as Jude the brother of James puts it, "*was once and for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude v.3). Yet the history of the Church from the time of the Apostles speaks of one challenge after another, not least that of persecution and martyrdom, as foretold by Our Lord himself. Our own Lancashire martyrs have left us an eloquent witness of fidelity to the faith in the most turbulent of times. Be brave and courageous, Daniel, as you step forward to be ordained priest. Scripture assures us that we are surrounded by *a great cloud of witnesses* (Hbs. 12:1). And we have the risen Lord's parting words to his disciples, "*Behold, I am with you always, even to the close of the age*" (Mt.28:20). We are not to be afraid!

I thank you, Daniel, for offering yourself as a priest to the Diocese of Lancaster. You will be warmly welcomed and your priestly ministry much appreciated and greatly cherished in the Diocese. Be a friend to those to whom you are sent, and they will befriend you. Keep in mind that first and foremost priesthood is a ministry of service to Christ's people. St. Augustine of Hippo, preaching once on the anniversary of his ordination as a bishop, told his people that the higher the ministry the greater the danger. So hear Christ the Lord speaking to you today through the prophet Micah as you begin your life as a priest, "*Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God*" (Mic 6:8). Amen.

+Michael G Campbell OSA
Bishop of Lancaster