

**Homily for the Diaconal Ordination of Arthur Bolivar OSA**  
**Birmingham, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2017**

*(Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9. Luke 18:1-8)*



Arthur, one of your principal tasks as a deacon will be to break open and explain the Word of God to the people to whom you are sent. Remember that it is God's Word you will proclaim and not your own. Contained in that Word of Holy Scripture is God's saving plan for the whole world: the wonders he has already accomplished, such as the Exodus from Egypt and slavery – the theme of our first reading from the book of Wisdom, but above the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, his Son. In these sacred texts of Scripture we also find nourishment and instruction for the daily living out of our faith such as perseverance in prayer, as we just heard in the gospel. You will also set before Christ's people the real hope found in Scripture, the future laid up and which God has in store for all of us.

As a deacon you will be a sign of the presence of Christ among his people: that he the risen Lord continues to walk among us, uttering words of comfort and of healing, and continuing to breathe forth the life-giving Spirit of his Father in this year of 2017. Through the laying on of hands, like Stephen and his companions in the Acts of the Apostles, you will become 'a minister of charity', particularly to the poor and downtrodden. Today, more than ever, people need to be reassured that there is a God who cares for us, and that each one of us matters and is important to him. People of today also need to hear again the freshness of the Gospel as brought to us by the Son of God, and they also want to know that the Holy Spirit is ever active in the Church, in the world, and in the human heart. That very exalted calling will be yours as a deacon.

Be convinced that the God of the Exodus is a God who delivers and saves. Make the story of his mighty deeds in Christ your own, so that as a deacon and accredited minister of the Church, you can tell others of the power of God to save and give new beginnings. Teach Christ's people the value of prayer, and how the cry to heaven never goes unheard. Christ stood among his disciples as a 'deacon', literally as one who serves. Model your life on him, and as a deacon be his faithful servant and minister. *Amen!*

+Michael G Campbell OSA  
Bishop of Lancaster