

Privilege to see those God calls



BY BISHOP ROB, COMMISSARY BISHOP

ISN'T it glorious that we, in the Diocese of Portsmouth, have just witnessed the culmination of years of preparation, prayer and pondering?

Over the last few weeks, many women and men have been ordained as deacon or priest, and others have been licensed as lay ministers (Readers) in the diocese.

These grand occasions are public statements of God being at work, glimpses of the Holy Spirit prompting and nudging through all sorts of people - family, friends and sometimes even the stranger. Every testimony is unique and is a clear reminder of God's unique relationship with each of us, loved for who we are, and loved unconditionally.

Of course, God calls people to individual ministries, and, thankfully, this is not confined to those who hold a bishop's license. Ministry is the realm of all the baptised. We are all in this ministry together. In our shared partnership, we pray for wisdom and grace to use our God-given gifts for "equipping his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up", as St Paul reminds us in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus.

As we share in ministry, I find it a real privilege to listen to one another's stories. I do hope that, as we journey further out of lockdown, we give space for

such sharing. Our discipleship, our becoming lifelong learners, means that we all have learning to share and in each other may discover something of grace. I do pray that we listen well.

I am also very aware that the diocese is going through an intense period of discernment too, as we seek to pray in a new diocesan bishop. I am so grateful to everyone who enabled Bishop Christopher and Sally to leave well, and I recognise that we all must play our part in seeking God's imagination into His future.

In the meantime, it is a delight to be journeying with you as your Commissary Bishop, alongside my duties as Bishop of Edmonton. The Edmonton area covers about 120 churches across 100 parishes of the London boroughs of Camden, Barnet, Haringey and Enfield. In addition, I also oversee the 'Growing Younger' priority across the Diocese, and the work of ALMA, (Angola, London, Mozambique Association).

I have spent the last 23 years in London in four different areas. It's a wonderful treat to see a different part of God's kingdom, and already I feel I am learning loads. As someone with some seaside roots, it is wonderful to smell the sea when I am in God's beloved diocese of Portsmouth. Thank you for your welcome, and I rejoice at the opportunity to minister alongside you all.

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