

Ordination and the present moment

Now retired from parish ministry I am very glad to have found my way to the Savernake Team. I am so grateful for the warm welcome I have received. Thank you!

June is more often than not 'ordination month' in the Church of England. Ordination services are often held near to the Feast of St Peter and St Paul on 29th June. These giants among the Christian saints are arguably the two most responsible for spreading the Christian Gospel in the days of the early Church. Their voices still reach out to us through the writings of the New Testament, calling us afresh to follow Christ and to boldness in witnessing to his love in our own time. It seems fitting therefore that the ordinations of those called to serve the Church as deacons and priests are in this season.

I have been recalling my own ordination, in particular because my ordaining bishop in 1994 was Bishop Richard Harries, then Bishop of Oxford. He was a wonderful inspiration, a great encourager and a deeply wise voice and mentor to his clergy. He was surely a giant of the Church in our time! It was such a sadness to hear of his death on 29th April. Many have appreciated his 50+ years of carefully considered contributions to the Radion 4 Today programme 'Thought for the Day' slot. In his last broadcast on 26th March he spoke of the 'sacrament of the present moment' - of learning to appreciate the beauty and potential of every moment, and of being open and receptive to what it might be asking of us.

Being receptive to the present moment is of course relevant to us all, but perhaps for those being ordained this month it may have particular meaning. The journey to ordination is always more lengthy and costly than one might expect: it will contain many 'present moments' in which one must be open and responsive to an unfolding vocation, seeking to hear the call of God, the call of the Church, and to grow through prayer, study and exploration. Many such moments lead to ordination. It is a solemn business as the Bishop reminds us in the Ordination service: *'Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel... with the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God'*. We pray for all those being ordained this month, including our very own curate the Revd. Brenda Woodrow, to be ordained priest on 27th June at Salisbury Cathedral. Do join us for the Team Holy Communion at 11am on Sunday 28th June at St Mary's, Great Bedwyn, when together we will celebrate joyfully with Brenda this new moment in her unfolding ministry as she presides at her first Holy Communion.

This June may we be mindful that for all of us every moment of every day is an opportunity to serve and glorify God in whatever we are doing, and in every moment may we have open hearts to receive and respond to his ever present grace in our lives.

The Revd Canon Christine Dale