

My dear brothers and sisters,

On Thursday 25th June, our new assistant curate for the parishes of St. John's and St. Andrew's will be licensed by Bishop Martin. Had it not been for the Corona virus pandemic we would all be going over to Chichester Cathedral to witness the ordination of (Fr.) Josh as a Deacon. But alas, his ordination as a Deacon will now have to be delayed until the beginning of October. Between now and October (Fr.) Josh Delia will be working in our parishes as a licensed Lay Worker. He will be able to preach, teach and assist me in many of my parish duties.



At the beginning of October (Fr.) Josh will be ordained Deacon. He will be what is known as a "Transitional" rather than a "Permanent" Deacon. This means that in June 2021 he will be ordained to the Priesthood, and a few days after his priestly ordination he will celebrate his first Mass.

But for 9 months he will inhabit the office of Deacon in the Church of God. We are all familiar seeing the ministry of Deacons at the Mass because we have a very fine Deacon in Deacon Rachel whose ministry is valued greatly.

The word "Deacon" comes from the Greek word *Diakonos* which means – "Servant" and everything we need to know about Deacons we find in the Scriptures. In the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that the Apostles laid hands on seven individuals making them "Deacons."

The intention was that these 7 Deacons would "wait at tables" doing the necessary but often labour intensive work, in order that the Apostles could attend to preaching the word of God."

The requirements for being a deacon are well described in the first letter of Timothy chapter 5 when it says; Deacons must be respectable whose word can be trusted, they must be moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money. They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of faith. They must finally be tested before they can be made Deacons.

Ordained Deacons remind the whole people of God that through our Baptism we are all called to be deacons. In other words we are called to be servants of one another, just as our Lord Jesus Christ “Came not to be served but to serve.” (*Matthew 20:28*)

In his first year as a Deacon, (Fr.) Josh will perform together with Deacon Rachel, all the liturgical functions that belong to the office of Deacon. He will proclaim the Gospel, prepare the gifts of bread and wine on the Altar at the Parish Mass; he will also dismiss the congregation at the end of the Mass. He will preach approximately once a month in his first year, and he will assist me in all duties and areas of parish work and life. As a sign that he is a Deacon and not a Priest, he will wear his stole diagonally over his left shoulder. Some famous saints who were Deacons include St. Stephen, St. Lawrence and St. Francis of Assisi.

I hope that during his 9 months as a Deacon however, (Fr.) Josh will be a walking, talking sign and reminder to us all, that although we are not all called to the ministerial ordained Diaconate, (although some of you might well be called to this ministry,) we are nevertheless all deacons by virtue of our Baptism. We are all called to be servants, we are all called to service in Christ’s name, following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ who came not be served but to serve and who washed his disciple’s feet at the Last Supper as a sacramental sign of his servanthood.

If you would like to welcome the Delia family to Worthing and our parishes, (Fr.) Josh, his wife Emily and their two children, Eva Maria and Joachim will be living at the following address:

The Vicarage,
56 The Boulevard,
Worthing
BN13 1LA

Love, joy and peace to you all from your priest and pastor.

Fr. Tim