

Ordination Service St. Barnabas day June 11, 2022

(Acts 11:19-30 & 13:1-3, Psalm 112, Matthew 10:7-16)

The Venerable Allan Carson

Isn't an ordination service one of the most glorious celebrations? The church, the body of Christ gathered together to celebrate the nurturing, the grace, the love of God moving and working among us. We are all included and mentioned in this service. It's not just about the people being ordained, although it would not be happening without them. It's about all of us. It's about the call of God on all of our lives. In a few minutes, or maybe in quite a few minutes because we don't move on to the next part until I'm done, and this is fun, and at clergy conference Dean Chris told me I could have as much time as I wanted, so eventually we will move on to the part called the examination. It comes right after the part where the candidate's proclaim and sign that they will "obey their bishop and other ministers who may have authority over them." So they sign their life away first and then we figure out if that was a good idea. It's nice that church life is consistent. We know it always works best if we can get visitors to sign up for envelopes before they figure out what they've got themselves into.

The part called the examination starts by reminding us that we all belong and that we all have the same call. It jumps right in proclaiming - "the church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Saviour and Lord, and to share in the renewing of God's world." We are here together celebrating God's grace and love and mercy revealed to us through Christ and we are all called to make the love and grace and mercy of God in Christ known and to participate in the renewing of God's world. All of us.

To help us as the church, as the body of Christ, accomplish this call we are asking Bishop John to lay his hands on Brynn, and Lorie, and José Luis, and Montgomery that the Holy Spirit would pour down upon them and consecrate them to the office and work of a priest. As Bishop John lays his hands upon them may we know and celebrate with the great cloud of witnesses who

have gone before consecrating others, like Barnabas, to be sent out to encourage and nurture the people of God.

The witness of Barnabas is one that we all need to hear. Our reading from the Acts of the apostles told us - "When Barnabas arrived and saw what the grace of God had done" - when Barnabas witnessed what the grace of God had done among the people. We can and often do miss or overlook the beauty and the glory of God's creation and God's presence that we are immersed in. It's so easy to be distracted by all those urgent and important things that call for our attention. We can miss beauty, we can miss glory, and we can miss grace. Barnabas saw what the grace of God had done and encouraged the people to keep focused on God among them with purpose of heart. Barnabas did not miss the grace of God touching lives and moving among the people. It is easy to lose sight of God's grace among us. Perhaps they had lost sight and were missing the reality of God's grace and needed Barnabas' encouragement. We all need encouragement. We all need each other so we will not miss the grace of God in our lives. We will never, as individuals, be enough to meet the needs that demand our attention but God's grace and love will always be more than enough. Always more than we can ask or imagine. Our Psalm reading spoke this encouragement into all of our lives - surely the righteous, the just, the justice lovers, will never be shaken. They will have no fear of bad news. Their hearts are steadfast, anchored, trusting in God. The task that we are consecrating Brynn, and Lorie, and José Luis, and Montgomery for this day is greater than any individual can do. But they are not called to be super human. They like all of us are called to keep our hearts steadfast, anchored, and trusting in the grace and love of God.

When Matthew tells us about Jesus sending out his disciples, sending us out, he tells them, tells us, to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near. He tells us to proclaim that God is near. There is no heaven without God so if heaven has come near, God has come near. Brynn, Lorie, José Luis, Montgomery, and all of us are to go like Barnabas knowing that God's grace and love are active and present. We are to help others see and know God's grace and love and encourage them. Then comes the more detailed, impossible part of the assignment - Heal the

sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. We did read that part of the job description at the retreat and they all still showed up today! Amazing!

Heal the sick. I attended a church conference once where one of the speakers was clearly fighting cancer. She had lost hair, her colour was bad, she appeared very weak. When it was her turn to speak she stood holding on to the lectern, caught her breath and then said I'm dying. We all actually knew that just from her appearance. And then she looked at us and added - and so are you. She then encouraged us with God's grace and love and brought healing and strength to all of our hearts. She was one of the healthiest people in that room. She witnessed to the grace and love of God in her life. In the presence of death she was filled with life. In God is life. Death where is your sting? Yes we are to raised the dead and dying to life as well.

Cleanse those who have leprosy. Bring the outsiders, the outcasts in. Make them at home. Make it clear that they belong and are at home. We can all identify those that are being treated or have been treated like lepers. Treated like they are not welcomed and do not belong. Some are the same no matter what community we are in but some are unique to each community. Jesus invites us to "Come you who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest." May we help those come in, be at home and rest in the one who fills us with a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Drive out Demons. Drive out that which is draining life and crushing life and obscuring the grace and love of God that so freely moves among us. Yes all of this is an impossible assignment to accomplish on our own. But we are never on our own. "Lo I am with you always to the end of the age promises our Lord." So Brynn, Lorie, José Luis, Montgomery, you and we are to go where we are sent - remember there is still that obedience to the Bishop thing - and like Barnabas we are to look for what the grace of God is doing and has done and encourage others to stay focus on God with purpose of heart. But Jesus also does warn us that sometimes it might not go so well. Sometimes we might not be well received. Sometimes our peace will not rest on those we have come to encourage. Sometimes the grace and love and mercy of God will

be missed, perhaps even rejected. But that is no more our fault than it is our glory when it goes well. Shake the dust off your feet and move on. Don't let even dust weigh you down and cloud you from seeing what the grace of God has done and is doing in the next place that you are sent and encourage them to keep focused on God among them with purpose of heart.

Brynn, Lorie, José Luis, Montgomery and the rest of us, who are the peace loving, grace witnessing, God focused, family of God - go. Go out among the wolves - some cautious fear and trembling might be wise, we are told to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Be shrewd, be innocent, be anchored to the hope and reality of the one whom death could not conquer, whom death could not hold. And Lo our Lord Jesus will be with you always to the end of the age.