

# Message from Bishop Robert

## 22 October 2024



I have written before of that moving moment in the confirmation service when the candidate declares their name, a man, a woman, a child, made in the image of God. I respond with the words of Isaiah, 'God has called you by name and made you his own' (Isaiah 41 v1) before the act of confirmation itself, praying the gift of the spirit, sealing the covenant between God and the confirmand.

In this simple but deeply significant moment, the value of each individual is affirmed. Each man, woman and child no matter who, is known by God, loved by God and called by God. Called by God to a fullness of life marked by worship and by service, members of God's Church, sharing in God's work in the world, work for the coming of the Kingdom. Each man, woman and child called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Much of this week's Bulletin has a focus on vocation, the Christian calling to life, and to share life as found in Jesus Christ. This is something that is both universal and particular. It is universal because the Church is the Body of Christ, the fellowship of all believers, a body in which we are all invited to take our part. It is particular because within that body there are a variety of ministries in which we are invited to share, lay and ordained, formal and informal, as we live out our particular calling within the Christian life. For most of us this will be in the context of our daily activity, work, family life, those things we do within our community. It might be through a commitment to prayer or through our engagement with politics or some charitable endeavour, or business. Within that there may be particular ministries we undertake within the Church, either our local parish or benefice, or the wider work of the Church in diocese or nationally. Again, this can be in so many ways, formal or informal, a church officer, the offering of simple pastoral care, a worship leader – many of these ministries are supported and encouraged with training from our Department of Mission and Ministry. For some it is in licenced or ordained ministry, a Reader, a deacon, a priest.

There are indeed a variety of gifts, we are as God's people wonderfully different and diverse, but the same spirit, the same Lord who is active in each and everyone. (1 Corinthians 12 v 4f.)

My invitation to you this week is to take a few moments and first to stay with those words from Isaiah and be conscious that God does know you by name and that God has made you his own. Then, in the awareness of God's love and calling for you to recognise and celebrate the ways in which you are responding while being open to things you may need to put down or to take up.

Above all else, as you reflect, remember that our trust is in God, for the one who calls is faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

+ Robert