Dear All

Revd Martin has entrusted me with writing a piece for the magazine this month. A privilege after being in post as Assistant Curate in Marston Moor Parish for only ten days, although it may be the one time I get asked to do it!

I’d like to start by saying a huge thank you for the love, support, encouragement, and generosity you have shown to me and my lovely family, Simon, Lottie and Sophie, since joining you here as an ordinand eighteen months ago. The parish feels very much like home, and we’ve enjoyed getting to know many of you over this time. It was lovely to see so many of you in York Minster at my ordination as Deacon on 28th June, a day that was so special and one that I will remember and treasure. The parish service in Askham Richard the following Sunday was also a wonderful occasion. Thank you to everyone who helped with the service and celebrations afterwards and for our thoughtful gifts. I will always use and treasure the beautiful shell that the parish has given me for baptisms.

So now that the celebrations are over, the question that many of you have been asking is what difference you will see in me now that I’ve been ordained as Deacon. Physically the main differences are that I’m now allowed to wear a dog collar and in services I can wear a stole over my left shoulder, across my body, showing that I am a servant. I am allowed to do funerals and baptisms but can’t take weddings or lead Holy Communion until I am (God-willing) Priested next June. So, in reality you won’t see many differences to what you have seen me doing over the last year or so, although since being ordained I do seem to have gained an ability to eat much cake and drink many cups of tea!

Joking aside, in the ordination service Archbishop Stephen explained that Deacons are:

“Called to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ’s kingdom. They are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God’s purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people. They are to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.”

So, you now all have a copy of my job description to which you can hold me to account! Essentially, I am to be a servant. But if you want to learn how this role should be carried out then this is best seen in the Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament in the Bible. The greatest example we have of servant ministry is that displayed by Jesus through his life on this earth. Despite being King, he served everyone with humility, compassion and selfless love. He demonstrated that true leadership is found in serving others with a heart full of grace and obedience.

I will continue to be a wife, mum and doctor and plan to carry on with my work in Leeds General Infirmary on Thursdays and Fridays during my curacy. But ultimately, I like you, am a child of God. In my role as Deacon, I join Martin in living and walking alongside you, encouraging you to be disciples and the people that God has created you to be in your everyday life. God calls everyone to do his work so over the next few weeks, months and years I hope to join you in whatever He and you are doing in our community. Whether that be at our coffee mornings, stay and play groups, in our primary schools, prayer group or Sunday services. If I’m honest I’m hoping I’m “called” to join you for lunch at the Spotted Ox one month!

I’m really looking forward to this next stage of ministry, meeting new faces and deepening the relationships that have already begun. I’m excited to share in the life of this community and to continue growing together.

Karen