

# To Serve And Not To Be Served: Same-same But Different



by Revd Dr Jeremy-Joe Tan

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022, The Diocese of Singapore witnessed a record-breaking number of 32 Ordinands who were ordained to the Diaconate and Priesthood. We rejoice and pray for them as they uphold their call to serve as clergy.

Same-same, but different.

This popular phrase from Thailand inadvertently came to mind as I was reflecting on the Ordination Service held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Many aspects of the service were similar to previous ones. The ordination liturgy was identical, and the setting of St Andrew's Cathedral remains the same. Furthermore, many of the clergy in attendance were familiar faces. Many things were same-same, so to speak.



That being the case, there were many significant differences. For one, the Ordination Service witnessed a record number of 32 Ordinands. A majority of them hail from our deaneries. This meant that the whole process leading up to the ordination had a rich and diverse flavour. For example, a stay-in Ordination Retreat is commonly held a couple of days before the service. It is usually more solemn and contemplative with no more than two Ordinands sharing a room. But the sheer number of Ordinands this time round meant that our retreat was done more like a youth camp with up to sixteen people in bunkbeds! However, this arrangement turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It facilitated many meaningful interactions and deep conversations.

The idea of things being the same yet different holds a deeper meaning yet. **Quite a few of us seemed drawn to that phrase in the service that reminded us "to serve and not to be served".** Taken from Mark 10:45, it is said during the post-communion prayer and, perhaps more significantly, at the ordination of the deacons. **It is a poignant reminder that becoming a "Reverend" is not about superiority,**

**self-satisfaction, or being smug. It is about servanthood.** In fact, that very word "deacon" comes from the Greek word "diakonos" which refers to a servant. It is this attitude of humble service that must characterise our ministry as ordained ministers.

In fact, such an understanding is inbuilt in our Anglican thought as reflected in the threefold order of deacons, priests, and bishops. The progress through the order must not be thought of as advancement. It is not a promotion from an intern to permanent staff and finally to being a boss. Rather, the vocations are stacked on. **The ordination into the diaconate remains valid even as one is subsequently priested or made a bishop; both the priest and the bishop are still deacons. In other words, the call to servanthood – to serve and not to be served – remains true for all clergy whether deacon, priest, or bishop.**

Personally, I found this is both challenging and comforting. The challenge lies in the reality that the ordination does bring with it some changes and differences. If anything, there will be more responsibilities and greater leadership roles both given and expected. Keeping our heads, hearts, and hands ground in humble service can prove difficult. But at the same time, there is comfort in knowing that in some ways the ordination changes nothing. Most of us were already loving and serving God, the Church, and our fellow Christians as lay leaders or pastoral staff. Our disposition and work as clergy is fundamentally no different from this. Or, as that phrase from Thailand reminds us – same-same but different. May we always continue to serve and not to be served!



# Testimonies from Deanery Ordinands

## Deanery of Indonesia



**Revd Andrias  
Tataming  
Deacon, Church of  
the Good Shepherd,  
Batam**

"Praise the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for His grace for me, for choosing and calling me to serve in GAI. When I attended the Ordination Retreat, I learnt many things, not only from the materials I received, but also from the warm and friendly atmosphere from all the candidates from the different deaneries, and Bishop himself. This ordination has reaffirmed my calling to the ministry, and inspired me to serve God more faithfully. I learnt that being a clergyman is

not to be esteemed or exalted, but instead, a call to be humble and passionate about serving, to the glory of God's name. I remember the moment when I knelt, and the Bishop laid hands on me and said: "Serve and not to be served, as did Jesus," these words encouraged me to serve God faithfully until the end. Being part of the Anglican ministry is the most beautiful thing because Anglican Church is not only a place to serve but also a family."



**Revd Josepha  
Tarigan  
Priest, New Life  
Anglican Church  
Medan**

"In 2005, I led a team to provide relief aid to those affected by the tsunami in Aceh. We constructed houses, provided medical assistance and education for children. With the encouragement of the then-Canon Kuan Kim Seng, the Singapore Anglican Church did not just help us financially but also sent teams each month to help us in Bandar Aceh. This was when I first came to know the Anglican Church. It was also an unforgettable

experience for me. Because of the teams that came every month, I learnt to speak English. During the period leading up to Ordination, I reflected on my time spent in Aceh. There were times when I felt that I was wasting my time there due to the conditions. However, during the Ordination Service on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022, God revealed to me that He was working to shape and prepare everyone He has called."

## Deanery of Cambodia



**Revd Wu Wenbin  
Deacon, Church of  
Christ our Peace**

Revd Wu Wenbin comes from Guangxi, People's Republic of China. He is married with two sons. He is assisting the Dean as a church worker in leading the Chinese congregation at Church of Christ our Peace, Phnom Penh.

Revd Wu occasionally felt discouraged while trying to discern his call. Nevertheless, he felt humbled at the end of the

Ordination Retreat, to such extent that the weight of this call, together with his sense of unworthiness, brought him to tears on the day of the Ordination.



**Revd Chan Phy  
Priest, Church of  
Christ our Redeemer**

Revd Chan Phy hails from the province of Svay Rieng and is married with a son and two daughters.

He has been serving as a deacon at the church in his province with two church workers under him.

The Ordination Retreat and Ordination Service have given him a greater understanding of the Ordinal and the instruments of governance of the Diocese and the Province. Revd Phy rejoiced at being able to fellowship and rekindle his friendship with the brothers of his international cohort.