

# Celebration of Ministries

Prayer: Eternal God, source of all life, may the words of my mouth  
and the seeking of all our hearts be guided by you. Amen

Aim: To encourage people to follow their calling collaboratively in a  
life giving way.

## *Introduction and Celebration*

Will you come and follow me?

Well, perhaps not me, personally

But the God whose praises have been sung  
whose compassionate love has been proclaimed  
whose gifts have been celebrated, in this service  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost  
the earth-maker, the pain-bearer, the life-giver,  
the well-spring of all love

Who calls you by name, gifts

And only asks "will you come and follow me?"

We have celebrated over 100 people who've done just that  
They stepped into the unknown territory of training  
So that... God's life might be grown  
And God's love shown around this Diocese and beyond  
And we give thanks to God for the good gift given in you.

## *The paradox of God's goodness*

And I wonder if you found in the course of your training  
that in asking you received; in seeking you found  
and doors you'd never even notice were opened through  
knocking

And God, indeed, gives good gifts to those who ask

I pray so. For such is the heart of the God we follow.

But I also wonder at times, if the asking gave only more questions  
The seeking ever more places to search

The knocking, opened a corridor of doors

And gifts received, sometimes felt, more like a stony snake?

And the gate was narrow, the burden heavy and the assignments  
hard.

And not everyone found the finish line.

But you, the faithful few endured,

and you followed the call

And today you receive the good gift of our celebration

And did you wonder, in your training, whether Jesus was entirely  
consistent in the gospels?

If not downright contradictory?

How can the gate be narrow and the road hard, if all you have to do  
is ask and seek and knock

Might one not wonder if these verse are entirely compatible?

Is there a reason these verses are juxtaposed with only the golden  
rule in between?

And hold on a minute - *what*, exactly, will be given to us? *what* will  
we find? and *what's* lurking behind the door?

and *when* will we receive? and *when* will we find? And *how*  
*long* do we have to keep on knocking?

and just how can the stony road fit a father of good gifts

Such is the paradox of the God who calls us by name

And no matter how hard we study, how long we serve

we still seem to find that following God is a narrow way  
and a serpentine route that leads to life,

And perhaps the song got it right:

A chaplain's stand for justice, always risks the hostile stare

A pastoral visitor must kiss the most repulsive leper clean

A spiritual accompanier needs to love the 'me' she'd rather hide  
A worship leader's constantly quelling of the fear inside  
And those who explore Christianity are never the same again  
And some of us have just dedicated ourselves to follow this  
paradoxical God.  
Was that wise?

### ***Complication***

Wise is one thing Moses father-in-law certainly was  
He took one look at his daughter's husband and knew exactly what  
road to destruction he was on!

Moses' dedication to God was beyond doubt  
He was following the burning-bush God who'd called him by  
name  
following God out of Egypt, saving the world  
And caring for the people God had gifted him.

But so many needs, so many questions, so many people  
Solving everyone else's problems but never his wife's!  
Father to Israel but not to his sons.  
Shalom, peace, LIFE God's good gifts.  
But this calling was no longer life-giving  
Not to Moses. Not to anyone.

The answer was not rocket science.  
He needed some Lay Pastoral Assistants (and no doubt a few Lay  
Worship Assistants for good measure)  
And he could've shared the burden further if only he'd chosen  
some women!  
Then. Then Moses could return to his calling,  
his unique calling, the heart of his name, his well-spring of love  
True leadership, true representation,  
enabling others to find their burning bush call

We know that Mrs Moses' father has it right  
God calls human beings not supermen or wonder women  
And maybe we'd squeeze through the narrow gate a little easier  
if we weren't carrying so much.  
Its not all down to us  
Thank God!

Wise advice! But don't follow me  
I still take the easier-to-do-it myself road to destruction  
Though I know the harder road leads to life  
Why?  
Is it Pride? fear? faithlessness? failure to ask and seek and knock?  
Maybe the answer's buried in the "me" I hide, if I will but love her  
And God's still calling - not to do, just to follow  
In his company to go  
where HIS love and footsteps show  
so all may move and live and grow.  
In God and God in us

That's why today's celebrations are so critical  
It's a releasing of new gifts  
A finding of our names  
A following of our calling  
for a reshaping of the world.  
our world, God's world

### ***Resolution***

God's work  
not ours. We only have to follow  
God's work - well spring of love  
life-giving gift  
calling our name  
reshaping the world for LIFE.

## *Lay Ministries Celebration*

### *Exodus 18:13-26 (edited verses)*

<sup>13</sup> The next day Moses sat as judge for the people.... <sup>14</sup> When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" <sup>15</sup> Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. <sup>16</sup> When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God." <sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law said..., "What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. <sup>19</sup> Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; <sup>20</sup> teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. <sup>21</sup> You should also look for able people, who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such people over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. <sup>22</sup> Let them sit as judges...; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace."

<sup>24</sup> So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.... <sup>26</sup> And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves.

### *Matthew 7:7-14*

<sup>7</sup> "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? <sup>11</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

<sup>12</sup> "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

<sup>13</sup> "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Thy hand, O God, has guided  
thy flock, from age to age;  
their wondrous tale is written,  
full clear, on every page;  
thy people owned thy goodness,  
and we their deeds record;  
and both of this bear witness;  
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings  
to greatest as to least;  
they bade men rise, and hasten  
to share the great King's feast;  
and this was all their teaching,  
in every deed and word,  
to all alike proclaiming  
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,  
through many a scene of strife,  
the faithful few fought bravely,  
to guard the nation's life.  
Their gospel of redemption,  
sin pardoned, man restored,  
was all in this enfolded:  
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,  
nor leave thy work undone;  
with thy right hand to help us,  
thy victory shall be won;  
and then, by all creation,  
thy name shall be adored,  
and this shall be their anthem:  
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

1. Will you come and follow me  
If I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
And never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
Will you let my name be known,  
Will you let my life be grown  
In you and you in me?

2. Will you leave yourself behind  
If I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
And never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
Should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer pray'r  
In you and you in me?

3. Will you let the blinded see  
If I but call your name?  
Will you set the pris'ners free  
And never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,  
And do such as this unseen,  
And admit to what I mean  
In you and you in me?

4. Will you love the 'you' you hide  
If I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
And never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
To reshape the world around,  
Through my sight and touch and sound  
In you and you in me?

5. Lord, your summons echoes true  
When you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
And never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
Where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
In you and you in me.