

Homily given by Bishop Emeritus Kevin Manning, Institution of Acolytes  
Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Rouse Hill, on Sunday 6  
December 2015

My dear people,

Today we welcome the young men who are to be inducted into the Ministry of Acolyte, which fits in well with the liturgy for the Second Sunday of Advent where we are asked to imitate Baruch and the Baptist in preparing for the coming of the kingdom.

As we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth we are reminded by the Book of Baruch of the return of the exiles in 538BC from their captivity in Babylon. It was the symbol of a great event yet to come and of the care God has for His people.

God consoled the Jewish exiles by releasing them and revived the words of Isaiah about the new exodus.

In the reading from St Luke, John the Baptist senses the people's need to hear the Word of God and heralds the arrival of the Kingdom in Christ with advice in preparing for Him: turn from sin, share your tunic and food, no extortion or intimidation, show compassion, share the needs of the community.

As we prepare for the second coming of Christ, in view of the present state of the world, we might well reflect on the similarities between the pre-Baruch and pre-Baptist times: states of war in different countries, contradiction of the Church's teaching, rejection of Christ and God in any form.

The scene is certainly set for the need of Christ to come again at the behest of the Father to redeem the mess which is the world today and for His faithful people to cooperate in every way with the Church in preparing for that coming.

In view of what I have said, we now reflect on the role of the young men who are offering themselves for the ministry of acolyte and who will have a special role in the Church's ministry.

Since the Eucharist is the summit and source of the Church's life, which builds up the Christian community and helps it grow, it will be your responsibility to assist priests and deacons in carrying out their ministry as special ministers to give Holy Communion to the faithful at the liturgy and to the sick.

Because you are specially called to this ministry you must strive to live more fully by the Lord's sacrifice and to be moulded more perfectly in its likeness.

You must seek to understand the deep spiritual meaning of what you do, so that you may offer yourselves daily to God as spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ.

In performing your ministry, bear in mind that as you share the one bread with your brothers and sisters, so you form one Body with them.

Show a sincere love for Christ's Mystical Body, God's holy people, and especially for the weak and the sick. Be obedient to the commandment which the Lord gave to His Apostles at the Last Supper: "Love one another as I also have loved you."