

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

At our recent ordination of new curates I started my sermon by asking the candidates; “What did it feel like when they first looked in a mirror and saw themselves wearing a clerical blouse or shirt?”

There's a great book “Legacy” about the All Blacks, the New Zealand national rugby team by James Kerr. He offers a fascinating reflection on the All Black jersey which is regarded as a semi-sacred thing. One famous star player, on being given his first shirt, held it with religious awe for almost a minute before putting it on. Kerr comments; in that moment of donning the jersey he was changed – he wasn't just wearing a rugby kit, he became an All Black.

In a similar way, at their ordination, our new curates didn't just start wearing a clergy collar, they became clergy.

During their pre-ordination retreat, Bishop Donald had led us through the letter to the Christians at Ephesus. It was appropriate that at the service in the Cathedral we heard words from the famous last chapter; “Put on the whole armour of God”. Again, it was good to be reminded that this isn't just about dressing up, but about joining up. In putting on spiritual armour we become spiritual soldiers.

In my sermon, I spoke of Christian character, lifestyle, integrity and the unity of God's people. In conclusion I drew one final lesson about being a



deacon (literally a servant) from being an All Black. Quite often ministry is simply about showing up, sometimes about setting up, frequently it is about clearing up! At the end of every international rugby match, the All Blacks review the game and then the two most senior players each grab a brush and sweep the changing room. The greatest willing to be servants. May God bless our new deacons as they and we follow Jesus in serving His world.

With my prayers and best wishes,

+John
Bishop of Brixworth