

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026

(Exodus 19:2-6a; Psalm 100; Romans 5:6-11; Matthew 9:36-10:8)

On Friday, I sat with a group of pupils at St Anne's school in Basingstoke. They had each prepared two questions to ask me about the Diaconate and my life as a deacon. It was a lively session, and the pupils had obviously put a lot of thought into the questions they asked. I answered as honestly as I could and they all seemed to enjoy the experience. For me it was a great reminder of why I serve as a deacon. A time of looking at the high points of my Diaconate and the days when it was really difficult, as well as a reminder of the sacrifices that both I and my family make; to allow me to serve.

When Jesus chose the 12 men to serve as apostles, they too had to make sacrifices. Their sacrifices were far greater than the ones I have had to make so far. In parallel with the First reading where we have the descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel who multiplied so much, they numbered the stars in the heavens and the grains of sand on the shore. (as originally promised to Abraham) We, the spiritual descendants of the Apostles are numerous. Through their hard work and their sacrifices, the Good News of Jesus has been spread to every continent on the earth and has even been taken into space. A high proportion of the Apollo astronauts in the 1960s and 70s were Christian and there was even a live TV broadcast Bible reading from space in December 1968 when the astronauts took it in turn to read from the first few verses of the Book of Genesis.¹

The twelve Apostles created a *New Israel*, and they were instructed to '*heal the sick, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.*' These are all healing activities, and they are not restricted to the ailments mentioned. This New Israel, which we are all part of, is a body who look out for those in need. **Our mission is to take God to those we meet.** By feeding the hungry we can help to heal the sick, by helping those with addictions to get healthy again we are cleansing the lepers in our society, by forgiving one another, we can cast out the demons which grip every sinner, those demons that tell us we are not good enough, those demons which urge us to repeat mistakes, those demons which promote apathy amongst the faithful.

The times when we are disheartened are the times when we allow apathy to enter our hearts. This is the enemy infiltrating our thoughts and influencing our actions, putting distance between us and God.

I've experienced this myself. At times, when I know there are sacrifices to be made, I can question if it's really worth it. Then, when I've done whatever 'it' was, I find that I've been truly blessed by meeting someone new, experienced something I'd never of thought of, or just enjoyed being with others.

During this week ahead, if you feel that God is not close to **you**, I'd like you to think again. God is always close in our relationship.

Ask yourself, **am I close to God?**

¹ [Astronauts Had 'Space' for God - The Tablet](#)

What is it in the choices I make which puts distance between me and God?

Our Scriptures today, remind us that God is always there. He rescued the Israelites from slavery and then sent His Son to rescue their descendants. Those who listened were saved, and sent out to widen the *Chosen people* to the **whole world**. Those original Apostles sent out as shepherds to the world to guide and teach, have their own descendants now. It is not by their blood and DNA that they can trace these descendants. Their descendants are the bishops of the Catholic Church today, and the blood they demonstrate their descentance by, is the Blood of Jesus Christ. The bishops of today still teach the Good News, they are our Spiritual fathers as successors to the Apostles.

The young people I met on Friday, have a thirst for learning more about our Faith. They asked about how I can encourage others in faith and on a previous visit another young person asked how **they** could encourage others to believe.

For me the answer is always by our actions.

People are more likely to want to follow Christ if they see Christians put our faith into action. That's what I try to do and that is what the Apostles all did until their dying breath.

I'd like to encourage us all to become more in tune with our mission here on earth; working with and for each other, to achieve it.

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCC 551, 761-766: the Church prefigured in Old Testament community

CCC 783-786: the Church a priestly, prophetic, royal people

CCC 849-865: the apostolic mission of the Church²

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- Those who have completed and those who continue with the RCIA programme; especially those who received the Sacraments of Initiation this Easter.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.

² [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)

- Those in need of work.

Deacon Tony

13th June 2026