

Ordination of Chris Cole

Matthew 20:20-28

“It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.” As we gather this morning on a hot day in July 2020 we are reminded of these words. *“but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.”* We have all come here at this appointed day and this appointed time to witness an amazing event. The ordination of a priest. A continuation of a journey well taken. This by no means, means that this journey is done. This is but one of many chapters that we get the chance to not only witness, but participate. So thank you, thank you Bishop Poulson, Canon Eric. Thank you to the family gathered, to the altar party, to the altar guild, to the singers, to the tech crew, to Trinity Tulsa, to all those gathered here, for those gathered via Facebook live-streaming. Thank you for being here and joining for this moment.

David, Christopher, Guerero, John Waters, Topper, Sunshine, Cole. Yes Bishop Poulson, I did some investigating and apparently the person being presented is known by many names, has many names, and it was my duty as the preacher, to bring this to light, make this abundantly clear. Those of you who wish to know about those many names, those other names, will have to ask Sunshine about all of that.

Hard lessons take a long time to learn. Some lessons take an entire lifetime. Children learn quickly not to touch the hot stove burner. It takes them a bit longer to learn that applying themselves in school will reap future rewards. Seminarians also quickly learn that to quote the professors published work is one of the quickest ways to possibly get a better grade on a paper.

It takes us a lifetime to learn what it means to be responsible person, contributing to church and society. The gospel lesson appointed for this day, the Feast of St. James, begins with the mother of James and John seeking glory for her sons. They had to learn what being a follower of Jesus truly entails.

There is more demand to being disciples than would appear, and finally facing that true glory is not found where we usually seek it. We receive true glory when we finally give up pursuing it and instead follow Jesus and the demanding life that is offered.

Why did the disciples follow Jesus? This gospel suggests they had possible reward on their minds; the glory, the position of sitting at the right and left of Jesus in positions of honor. It took the disciples a long time that the real reward of following Jesus would be completely different from what they had expected.

There is nothing in this life that can bring us lasting glory – but the eternal life that has been prepared for us and in which we already share – that except self-giving, self-emptying, that self-sacrifice for the sake of others that is what conforms us more closely to Jesus' own self-identity as the suffering servant. Which is most appropriate to use the Feast of St. James and this lesson from the gospel of Matthew to point to directly just that.

Jesus poses a question that I believe becomes the undergirding, the foundation, and the very question that Bishop Poulson will ask, *“Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?”*

Sunshine, I mean Chris, from the beginning of this journey well taken, you have been asked this question. From the yearning and calling deep within you this question has been asked. As you began to even consider this journey this question became deeper, louder, more and more profound. As time passed you had conversations with many people, with many ordained persons, with family, friends, and even maybe complete strangers. All of them becoming vessels of the Abba God, asking you the same question, *“Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?”*

As you began to think, ponder, even remotely consider the possibility of seeking the ordained ministry, that same question begins to rise within you. Then the process of discernment truly begins and committees begin to ask you the same. Then meeting with multiple priests, Father McKee, Pastor Kristi, and now me, all along being asked, “*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?*” Then meeting with Bishop Ed and now Bishop Poulson, who himself just recently answered that same question, as he became the Bishop of Oklahoma. And Bishop Poulson we are so honored and humbled that you answered that question, answered God with an affirmative, “*I am able.*”

And now Chris, once more you are being asked, “*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?*” Bishop Poulson will ask you in this place and at this time, that same question, realizing that from the very beginning you have not done this alone. Many have assisted, walked, and prayed for you to get here. God has walked with you through all of his. Remember God is not gonna give you more than you can handle and I will add “**with God.**” This all ties back to our Baptismal Covenant, in which each question is asked, our response is “**I will with God's help.**”

Chris, in a few moments, you will be asked, “*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?*” Remember, much of our serving others is simply part of everyday circumstances, for example, parents taking care of their children or a worker cooperating with others on a team job, and yes obeying and listening to your bishop. Being a servant of all is not something extra or big. Most of the time, it is simply doing our everyday tasks generously and with integrity while keeping in mind that others are the Body of Christ and to serve them is to serve Christ. If you, we, can do these everyday tasks with loving care, then when something big comes along we will not deny Jesus, but like James in the gospel the answer becomes, “*We are able.*” Amen.