

# The Works

At an Ordination just before the Bishop lays his hands on the person about to be made a Priest or Deacon he asks some questions. These are about commitment to service and faithfulness to the vocation. The Bishop then says 'May God, who has begun the good work in you, bring it to fulfilment.'



This line is both a prayer and a word of encouragement. It comes from Saint Paul's letter to the Philippians and it is the first reading at Mass on Friday. In the translation we use at Mass we hear Saint Paul say, 'the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes'.



Paul was writing to deacons and presbyters and all the saints. It is very appropriate that a Bishop echoes him as he speaks to those about to be ordained.

At the same time, the words apply to 'all the saints' and by that Paul means all of us. God begins good work in us and brings it to fulfilment.

Whether we are priests, deacons or lay people these words remind us that the good work which goes on in our lives began with God. This prevents imagining it is all our own work. We need God to start us off or give us a nudge. We might think that we thought of it but really we have been prompted by the Holy Spirit.

It helps to remember that what we do is God's work. If we feel unsure of ourselves or worry whether we are doing the right thing it is important to place our trust in the Lord. He started it and he will finish it. No matter how hard the work may be or how daunting, God will be there to lean on and keep us right.



If God starts the work and completes it, where do we come in?

We are asked to say 'yes' to God. What God wants are co-workers and willing instruments. The work begun in us is started by God and he completes it.

If others imagine it was all our doing, God is not jealous; he likes us to succeed and receive praise just as any parents feel a glow of pride when their children do well.



It is important to encourage and praise others in what they do. Priests or deacons need the support of the people of their parish to help them in their service. Family or friends need words of appreciation to help them in what they are doing.

If I am on my own, isolated or self-isolating, I still need to recognise that God has begun good work in me and will see it through to the end.

*May God, who has begun the good work in you, bring it to fulfilment.*