

I write this just after celebrating my 10th anniversary of Ordination to the Diaconate. A wonderful day, albeit a little daunting, as I had no idea what the future would hold. (I also approach my 2nd anniversary of being here).



Over the years I've had tears and laughter, failures and successes, exhilaration and exhaustion, sickness and health but most of all, I've had love. Not only the love of God but I've also had the unending love of my husband and daughters, who didn't ask to be on this journey but were willing for me to begin it, not knowing where it would take us. I've had the love of new friends who I've met on this journey, lay and ordained. I've had the love of church members who have encouraged and guided me along the way.

Now I'm not naïve and know that we cannot all love as God does, after all, we are mere human beings, made in the image of God, invited to grow into the full stature of Christ, but, we haven't reached perfection. So, I know that in a community (even a church community), we will have differing views and opinions, likes and dislikes.

However, one thing we take pride in within the Scottish Episcopal Church, is our ability to unite in our differences and I pray that is so, here at St. Cuthbert's.

I am beginning two weeks sick leave today, after fighting for eight weeks with coughs, chest infections and bronchitis. I have had steroids and antibiotics on a number of occasions and on my last visit to the doctor, I was told off for not having taken any sick leave, hence it begins now.

This has made me reflect on why I wouldn't take any sick leave. I am not indispensable and I am certainly not superwoman – but it appears I may have believed I am. My apologies to any of you whose visits have been cancelled, Home Communion postponed or meetings not attended.

Feeling as I have been, I have been useless to most. So, I thank my doctor and my wardens for their support and guidance in making me take this time off, reminding me that I am a mere human being and to, hopefully, return refreshed and ready to continue in the very privileged role I have. However, I still haven't come up with an answer as to why I wouldn't take sick leave.

At my ordination, before being vested, the Bishop said:

“Father of all, your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, came among us in humility, and taught that those who rule must serve. Through every age he sends his Spirit to fill those whom he has chosen, to equip his people for ministry and to build up his body, the Church. You have called your servant Nicki (*The Bishop lays hands on the head of the candidate*). Pour now upon her your Spirit and make her a deacon in your Church, to proclaim your love in word and deed. As our Master Jesus washed the disciples' feet, may your servant

follow that example. May Nicki be holy, disciplined and sincere; may her words declare your truth, that her life may shine with the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns one God for ever and ever.”

I look forward to returning from two weeks rest on July 1st, with the energy and zeal to continue in the amazing role I have, in proclaiming God’s love in word and deed and to follow the example of Jesus in washing the disciples’ feet and I thank everyone who has been a part of my journey so far and those who support and guide me as rector here.

Love and blessings.

Nicki