Elizabeth Ferard 1825-1883 First deaconess in the Church of

Ferard



England Elizabeth

was

near King's Cross - and on 18 July 1862 she became, by the laying on of hands by Bishop Tait, the Bishop of London (and later Archbishop of Born in February 1825, Canterbury), the first deaconess in Catherine the Church of England. She is a reported to have been very unwilling

to retire in 1870, but she later ran a

an early trail. In some branches of

remains open to

institutions:

the

deaconess credited with to take a leading role in this way but revitalising the deaconess order in her determination and faith enabled the Anglican Communion at a time her to overcome her shyness.

England

when women had very little Because of ill health Elizabeth had influence in the church. After her mother's death in 1858 convalescent home for children in she travelled to Germany to stay at Redhill. She died at 16 Fitzroy Square Kaiserwerth where a new order of in London on 18 April 1883. Her Deaconesses had been established in legacy remains to this day; through 1836 for nursing and teaching, and her efforts were founded two Church although the trip was unsatisfactory of in many ways she was determined Community of St. Andrew (the final that something similar could and name (1943) of the North London should be done in London. She had Deaconess Institution, which in 1868 caught the zeitgeist: the idea of had become the London Diocesan

creating an order of Deaconesses in Deaconess Institution), and Order of the Church of England was being Deaconesses. Although the Order discussed in the same year at the was closed to new entrants in 1987, Convocation of Canterbury. Upon her this was because women were then return to England Elizabeth evidently admitted to the order of deacon, and secured the support of the Bishop of subsequently priest (1994) and perhaps equally bishop (2015). One wonders what London and, importantly, managed to get funding Elizabeth would have made of these from a relative the Revd. Thomas P. developments for which she blazed Dale.

In 1861 Elizabeth was able to open the Anglican communion other than Deaconess the Church of England, the Order of the North London Institution at North London Deaconesses Deaconess House in Burton Crescent women.

Web address: www.stcrossknutsford.org.uk

The Vicar writes.....

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I write this letter having been to our Mother Church of Chester Cathedral this morning for the ordination service for deacons at which, of course, our new curate Revd Mike Duncombe was ordained to the diaconate. Mike will continue his ministry, formation and training with us and, God-willing, will be ordained as a priest next year.

It does seem to me in the structure of the ministry of the church that there are so many blurred boundaries or overlaps between the various ministerial roles of pastoral worker, reader, deacon and priest, but at the heart of it all it is about telling the story of God's love for the world in Jesus, in word and action.

Deacons were first ordained into the ministry of the church when the apostles were unable to cope with the demands being placed upon them (Acts 6). In a rapidly growing church seven were chosen to support the apostles in their ministry of teaching and preaching. Seven men of good standing full of the spirit and wisdom were selected. Having been chosen, they stood before the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them. Many of us would struggle to name these seven deacons but the most well-known is surely Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Stephen, we are told, was full of grace and power doing great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6.8).



St Cross Newsletter

July 2025

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This year at Chester saw a small intake of deacons to be ordained, and by coincidence seven in number. This is perhaps a consequence of a smaller number of people being available to respond to God's call in Christ to this ministry currently. Nonetheless these seven people have all responded with faithfulness to that heavenly call to serve Christ in the church.

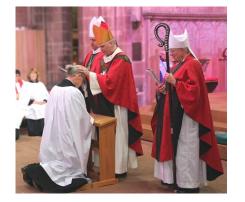
After the service someone said to me 'it's a bit like re-living your wedding day'. And that is true. I've had the joy and privilege in recent years of overseeing Simon Gowler's training and formation and now Mike Duncombe is here with us. The feeling I experienced today walking down in the silence of the cloister and then waiting to enter the church was the same feeling I experienced twelve years ago at my own deaconing service. One might say those feelings were in fact a spiritual experience, feelings which left me with a sense of wonder and joy. Despite what we may perceive, see or feel, is happening in the church, the Spirit of God is still at work calling people to the Lord's service.

Ordination and licensed ministry is not for everyone, in fact it is for a relatively small number of people, but God has a purpose for each and every person in their lives to fulfil. I am hugely grateful for the great number of people who have helped me along life's way, be that my family, the church at all levels, those who taught and encouraged me in my formative years, and for those who helped me overcome physical challenges in recent years through the gift of medicine.

For our parish of St Cross to be one of just seven from Chester Diocese to be chosen this year as the training parish for one of the deacons is an honour. Alongside that comes the responsibility for us all to enable Mike to fulfil his calling to the priesthood, and together with him in mutual flourishing to play our part in the mission and outreach of the church.

Yours, in Christ

Paul



Revd Mike receives the Laying on of Hands by Bishop Mark



Revd Mike with Revd Paul and Revd Clair Jaquiss from All Saints', Hale Barns

Diary for July

Mondays

2-4pm Monday Together in the Parish Room

Fellowship, refreshments and activities supporting the work of the church.

Sunday 6 July

After the 10am service of Morning Worship refreshments and a special cake will be served to welcome our new curate, Revd Mike Duncombe.

Tuesday 8 July

7.30pm Lectio Divina (on Teams)

Thursday 24 July2pmMothers' Union

There were no Occasional Offices in June