

WEDNESDAY, 27TH AUGUST 1997

PRACTICING THE FAITH WE PROCLAIM

a period of quiet reflection

You may have thought of the Diaconate as a great privilege. This worthy thought can deteriorate into thinking of it as a *possession*. Peter's attempt to become the saviour of Jesus is one result of that. He wants to take responsibility, and he ends up hi-jacking the plan of God, reducing it to "*man's way, not God's*".

In **the second half of the Gospel of Luke** Jesus trains his disciples in *detachment* and in the gift of themselves to God for the purposes of his reign. If you do a trolley-dash through you will spot these places from the J B headings. Everything the disciples have, *including the apostolate*, is God's work in them. Only when this hard lesson is driven home, during the Passion, does Peter undergo the experience of having his mission withdrawn, his relationship with Jesus broken and dishonoured, and his whole hope destroyed. Then he is ready to have all these given back to him, no longer as a possession, but as a gift of grace.

1. Read **Ephesians 4 - 5** and see how the author thinks of the different ministries. Is this how you think of yours?
 2. Do the members of your family seem ready to sustain you as a Deacon, and to welcome the reality of your ministry? How have they coped with your studying, with the idea of having a minister in the home? Is there anything here which makes you anxious or unsure?
 3. What experience, if any, do you have of showing up in the rôle of "the Catholic representative"? How will you feel about it when it happens?
 4. Is there anything personally worrying you at this point in your training, about which you could usefully seek advice?
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*"Put on the new man that has been created on God's principles,
in the uprightness and holiness of the truth."*