

Translation of the address by the Archbishop of Uppsala, Antje Jackelén, at the consecration of Fredrik Modéus as Bishop of the Diocese of Växjö on 12 April 2015.



Photo: Magnus Aronson/IKON

Dear Fredrik,

It won't be long now! I remember the relief and the joy you felt when the election result was declared. You really wanted to be a Bishop and to make yourself available for this service in Jesus Christ's church. You have had plenty of time to ponder what it means to be a Bishop, how you would like to embark on that role and what you, uniquely, would be able to contribute through the gifts God has given you.

You have already had to reply many times to questions like "What do you want to achieve? What are your goals? How will you turn round negative trends?" There are rightly big expectations of a Bishop. You have spoken about living worship, sound teaching, and courageous pastoral ministry. Through your experience as a parish priest and through your work with and around parish growth you have been able to build up a competence that is good both for the diocese and for the college of bishops. And of course it is splendid that your doctoral dissertation in systematic theology about the worshipping community in the national church is now ready and will shortly be defended.

Yes, there are expectations on you, Fredrik, both from the community and from within the church. And most, I believe, are good and legitimate expectations. That is usually the case. But there are also those with hugely unrealistic expectations. And then it obviously needs to be said: no, the crozier is not a magic wand. Wave it once over the diocese, and the problems are solved... sometimes certainly that thought is tempting, I must admit, but it is probably still best that the crozier is just a shepherd's crook and nothing else.



In your episcopal coat of arms the shepherd's crook is furnished with a Taizé cross which you want to express the balance between prayer and work. Truly a good balance to strive after for a church leader! At the same time, too, a challenging balance, for if it is misunderstood it can become a hugely tiresome project, which of course Martin Luther discovered after a lot of agony.

Then prayer and work can obscure the very basis - the basis of your arms as well as the basis of the whole of our faith. Grace! Your motto is clear: *Sufficit tibi gratia dei*, God's grace is all you need, as we read in St Paul (2 Cor 12:9). The grace that you received in your baptism is sufficient for you. It is something to be grounded on.

"Be grounded in grace, be creative in the world": possibly the vision [statement] of Lund diocese has set a small mark there. For this is precisely what your coat of arms brings together, grace and the task. There is the grace on which you are founded; you stand with both feet on firm ground. Christ's atonement is there as the base, symbolised by the lamb. So far there is peace and quietness. With that alone you could in fact become quite a lazy Bishop. But then there is the eagle! It radiates strength and freedom. And it has the overview that is a prerequisite for the Bishop's oversight - and task of giving support and encouragement, as you write.

It is, to be sure, a sharp eagle-eye that we see in your coat of arms: it inspires respect. And we know at least two things about an eagle's look: The eagle's eye has a greater resolution than the human

eye, therefore the eagle, despite hovering high in the sky, nevertheless sees the small details. We do not know how eagles perceive colours but we know that they discern more colours than we do - they see the nuances that so easily escape us.

Hold on tightly to that! Strive to attain an overview without missing the crucial details. It protects you from sweeping generalisations. Things like that lead to a church that produces platitudes, instead of infecting the world with hope and the will to life through worship, teaching, pastoral ministry and mission. Or to a church that paints only with nice little pastel colours instead of adding the stronger tints that God's multi-coloured grace has provided us with. So search for the multiplicity of shades, like the eagle. It is so incredibly important, particularly in our time. We see how polarisation increases in area after area. It becomes too much either-or and too little both-and. Then, the market grows for black and white pictures that are often caricatures of a shade-rich reality. Then truth, justice, peace and the possibility of working together are threatened.

The eagle's overview with a sense for both details and nuances - that is one of the gifts of grace that I wish you in rich measure. And so I am, of course, very happy about the ball in the eagle's claws. Humour and playfulness often risk being underrated. Let us not forget that people at play are a precious expression of God's grace. To play is part of being God's image.

God's grace is all you need, as your motto says. But perhaps now you also need a little fisherman's luck, to link in today's Gospel reading; so that it becomes not only words, but a lot of 'shop-floor' [i.e. it has practical implications] too. In fact there are not many words exchanged there on the beach at dawn. There are more fish than words, if one may put it that way.

"When the morning came Jesus stood on the beach." The disciples did not recognize him. We may leave aside the questions of whether it was due to his resurrection body still being different or if it was the dawn light combined with morning mist and fatigue. But we hear an everyday question - have you no fish? - and a quite remarkable direction to throw out the net to the starboard side of the ship starts a process that leads both to solid success and to deepened faith. The net becomes full to bursting with fish and a realisation is born that is quickly shared by everybody: "It is the Lord!"

When they come up on the beach they see that there is already bread and fish on the coals: grace is similarly prepared beforehand. Nevertheless Jesus asks for more: fetch some of the fish that you just caught. Grace is there and anticipates the results of our work. Nevertheless Jesus asks for results. Results for which he himself has provided the prerequisites. "Come and eat", he says. And, like the travellers to Emmaus, it is at the meal that they become certain that they have fellowship with the Risen One.

It is at dawn on the beach that this encounter happens. In an environment where there is little either-or and a lot of both-and. Both darkness and light. Both water and land: the waves wash over the beach, waterfowl and people run to and fro at the water's edge. Both recognition and estrangement, both set-back and success, weakness and strength. On the beach, the boundaries become permeable. Here is both church and world. Not a church that fights for its own space in the world but one that fights for the world's liberation. The beach's both-and: there Jesus is recognized.

On the beach Jesus has arranged the coals for us. They give light, they give heat. But we burn ourselves when we begin to take them apart, when we dissect the mystery so that it becomes contextless fragments. Similarly we miss the point if we change costly grace to cheap grace, to use a thought of the priest and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer - the 70th anniversary of whose execution fell, of course, three days ago. Cheap grace is about a thoughtless and unbounded squandering with

careless hands, about faith as superficial opinion that lets everything be as it has been. Costly grace gives understanding, sometimes dearly bought, and it transforms, there by the burning coals on the beach.

There he takes the bread and gives... and we recognize him. He lives and grants us to eat of the bread of life. In Växjö diocese there are many beaches, both seaside and lakeside beaches. And there are many places where the coals are live. All you people from Växjö diocese; grace and the task are the concern of all of you: tend the beaches, all those places where boundaries are open so that encounters can happen, and tend the glowing coals that the Risen One has entrusted to us. May God's Spirit strengthen us all so that we become good beach-keepers and tenders of the coals. For Christ's sake, for the world's sake. Amen.

Translation: Tony Dickinson, edited by Michael Nunn