

Thought for the day – Wednesday 13th July 2022

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

Equipped for Service

Bible Passage: Acts 6:1-7

6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews^[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

In Acts chapter 6, we see another purpose for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. As well as to equip believers to preach and perform healings and signs, She also equips them to serve food for the hungry. The apostles, first pray and lay their hands on seven of the believers. This is the founding principle of the diaconate, and it also reminds me of the ordination of priests, which I went to last Saturday week.

Anyone who calls themselves a Christian is a deacon and a priest, in this wider understanding of the terms. We all have the same Holy Spirit and the calling to serve. We have been anointed and equipped for the task.