

Tapio Luoma consecrated Archbishop

Tapio Luoma was consecrated Archbishop in the Turku Cathedral on 3 June. Luoma was consecrated by Bishop **Samuel Salmi** from Oulu, who is senior in rank among bishops.

The newly appointed Archbishop was blessed by the laying on of hands, enrobed in the official insignias of office and handed the Archbishop's cross and crosier.

In the consecration, Bishop Salmi was aided on altar by Archbishop Emeritus **Anders Wejryd** from the Church of Sweden, Bishop **Helga Haugland Byfuglien** from the Church of Norway, Bishop **Peter Skov-Jakobsen** from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Bishop **Agnes Sigurdardottir** from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, Archbishop **Urmes Viilma** from the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Archbishop **Michael Jackson** from the Church of Ireland.

President Sauli Niinistö also attended the ceremony.

Archbishop Luoma's inaugural sermon was based on the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 16:24–27). In the Gospel, Jesus talks to his disciples about choices and decisions, about what is important and valuable, about what is good for people.

According to the Archbishop, the message Jesus sent about the right order of things aptly summarises what the Christian faith and church life are about: people, whom God made and who need God and other people in life.

“It is about people, whose decisions and choices affect other people and the world. It is about people, whom God loves and through whom he wants to make his love known to all.”

Focusing on the human good

Archbishop Luoma stated that Finland needs more discussion about values. The challenges of such discussions have, however, become very clear: pointed opinions divide people into camps who find it difficult to communicate with each other.

“Despite this division, there is one thing that we all share: a consideration of the human good. In one way or another, all responsible solutions and choices aim to account for the human good.

“Therefore, our problem does not lie in us not understanding what is good for us, but in the different values that steer us in many different directions when we pursue this good.”

Luoma also reminded us that, ultimately, human goodness is not only up to us: its source is Jesus Christ, who is human and God in one.

“This is one expression of what is meant by Christocentrism. In Jesus, human goodness is combined with the goodness of God. To take others into account is to serve God, and to respect others is to respect God,” Luoma reminded us.

Do not forfeit your soul

Archbishop Luoma pointed out that when Jesus asked, “What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”, he led us even deeper into reflection about our value hierarchy.

“Indeed, what good would it be to pursue happiness if nothing is ever enough? What good will prestige be if it requires you to be something you are not? Or what good will high rank be if it blinds you and causes you to lose the will and ability to put yourself in another person’s shoes?”

“Jesus said that forfeiting one’s soul is a great misfortune. In doing so, you lose the chance to establish a deep connection with other people and with God. In doing so, you lose something of the true humanity God vested in us,” stated Luoma.