



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

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Homily at Mass 2nd Sunday of Lent, Year C – 17 March 2019

“Look up” God tells Abraham: count the stars in the night sky. The apostles look up, St Luke tells us, and after the extraordinary experience of the Transfiguration they see only Jesus. Look up, St Paul invites us today: look to Heaven, our ultimate goal and destiny. Look up now, look around – what do we see? We see our family, the Church, we see our brothers and sisters in faith, we see that God is with us now – always.

The Gospel story of the Transfiguration is always included in God’s Word on the Second Sunday of Lent for the same reason that Jesus took Peter, James and John to the top of Mt Tabor. St Luke tells us what happened: Our Lord’s body, especially his face, began to shine with the bright light of the sun. A cloud surrounded them, enveloping them. Jesus was joined by two great heroes of the Old Testament: Moses representing the Law of God; and Elijah representing all the prophets. Jesus fulfils the hopes of the prophets – everything they dreamed of and hoped for. Jesus fulfils the law of God – he personifies all that God calls us to: perfect love for God and generous and whole-hearted love for our neighbour.

The mystery of God the Trinity seems to be present before the eyes of the apostles: Jesus, the Son of God; the voice of God the Father; the cloud which is another sign of the Holy Spirit. From this moment, St Luke tells us, Jesus lifts up his eyes looking towards Jerusalem – almost marching along the road, with his disciples struggling to keep up. The bright glory of the Transfiguration points to the splendour and joy of our Lord’s Resurrection: but first there must be the Cross, our Lord’s “passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem”.

Coming into our churches we find it easy to “look up” – we look up now and see Christ crucified – the great symbol which stands front and centre in every church. In a few moments we “look up” as we do every time Mass is offered and we see the Eucharist raised before our eyes – in the mystery of bread and wine Jesus Christ is present with us, he offers himself for us, in Holy Communion we receive him in his Body and Blood, we taste Heaven. The joy of Sunday, our celebration of Mass, the community life we share with one another, all these things lift us up – we depart the Church, we return home, we start the working week feeling uplifted, positive, upbeat, chin up.

Today is the feast of St Patrick – patron saint of Ireland and patron saint of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. This feast connects us with those early migrants and pioneers who established Melbourne and laid the foundations of the Church we are proud to belong to. St Patrick began life as a slave, a shepherd boy watching over a small flock of sheep. He is best known as a missionary and a bishop – a shepherd of souls who won the people of Ireland for Christ. Down the centuries the Irish people have honoured his memory by keeping their faith and share it themselves, as courageous missionaries ever loyal to the Church even in times of struggle, persecution and hardships.

With St Patrick, we look up to Christ. This is perhaps his most famous prayer:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.