



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ Telephone: (03) 9569 2099

✉ glenhuntlycaulfield@cam.org.au

www.cam.org.au/glenhuntlycaulfield

ABN: 70548 570 366

Homily at Mass 5th Sunday of Lent, Year C – 7 April 2019

“I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”

Sunday by Sunday you and I come to know Christ Jesus. At Christmas time we kneel before him, enthroned in the manger, the new born infant Son of God and Son of Mary. As the Church year progresses week by week we discover more about him, his teaching, his miracles, his gentleness, his courage. On the last Sunday of the Church year, we acclaim Jesus our King and Lord. And as we enter into the last two weeks of Lent, traditionally known as Passiontide, we feel close to Jesus in his pain and sorrow, his grief and tears. On Good Friday we take our stand beneath his Cross, along with Mary. And a fortnight from today we will rejoice in his victory over death and the grave – the unique feast that makes our religion true and great, filled with hope and joy, and aimed towards eternal life in the company of the saints in Heaven.

St Paul describes his joy in knowing Christ Jesus. Could he ever forget the day he first encountered Jesus the Lord? St Paul never met Jesus during the years of Our Lord’s public ministry. He first appears in Christian history in the account of the martyrdom of St Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles. St Luke tells us that Saul presided over Stephen’s death by stoning: “he entirely approved of the killing” (Acts 8:1). Soon after that Saul was making his way to Damascus, determined to arrest Christians and destroy the new Christian religion at its roots, when Jesus appeared to him: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me.” Blinded by this light, Saul began to seek the light. He became a Christian, an apostle, a missionary; his sermons and letters form the foundation of all Christian theology: he stands tall as a pillar of the Church, along with St Peter. Both of them suffered martyrdom within days of each other at Rome – Peter was crucified and St Paul beheaded around the year 67.

If only we had a Gospel testimony of this woman in today’s Gospel as well as so many of the holy women who knew and loved and cared for Jesus. Some traditions identify the woman caught in adultery as Mary Magdalene – a woman who loved Jesus so much that she probably couldn’t sleep between Our Lord’s death and burial and the first hours of the day we know as Easter Sunday. The Gospel writers tell us that she was there at Calvary on Good Friday. We also know that she and others came to the tomb around dawn on Easter day with oil and perfume to anoint Christ’s body, and with tears and sad and heavy hearts. Mary Magdalene was the first to learn of our Lord’s Resurrection. Pope Francis speaks of her as the apostle to the apostles: to her was entrusted the mission to tell Peter and the others that Jesus is risen, alive, victorious!

What testimony could the woman of today's Gospel story give us? She could tell us about being used and abused by men – she is accused of adultery, but where is the man? Can we feel her fear as she was dragged and pushed along the road up to the Temple, and thrown in front of Jesus and an excited crowd? Can we feel her shame? Can we see through her eyes the angry old men with their rocks and stones, and their hatred for her and for Jesus? Did she perhaps even fear Jesus – would he, the sinless One, be the first to throw a stone? Can we feel the change in her heart – her sense of relief, freedom, even escape – as she hears Jesus say to her: “I do not condemn you ... go away, go in peace, do not sin anymore.”

The Church's Catechism for young people YOUCAT, offers all of us this priceless encouragement:

What are the positive effects of confession?

Confession reconciles the sinner with God and the Church.

The second after absolution is like a shower after playing sports, like the fresh air after a summer storm, like waking up on a sunlit summer morning, like the weightlessness of a diver ... Everything is contained in the word “reconciliation” (from a Latin verb meaning “to bring back together, to restore”): we are at peace with God again.

YOUCAT n.239