



## The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

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### Homily at Mass 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C – 10 February 2019

“Give it a go”. “Try it out”. In these words parents encourage their children, teachers and sport coaches inspire the young to take even small steps to build their confidence, perhaps even to open a door to still to be discovered skills which could one day be the making of them. Life offers a huge variety of choices. All of us have particular gifts and talents, some innate, others that call for practice and training. Some have the gift of music, others drawing or painting, or creative writing or a way with words. Our children can excel in sport or dance. Apart from these skills, more than anything else, we want our children to shine in those aspects of Christian life that really matter. Goodness, generosity, sensitivity, compassion, friendship, respect for their parents and teachers while growing in their love for God, the experience of prayers, and a sense that the church is God’s Family, and Sunday Mass is our weekly meeting with God and one another.

Today, Jesus urges the fisherman Simon Peter to do more than “have a go”. He calls him to ignore all that experience teaches him and all that he knows from his trade as a fisherman and drop his nets into the lake in broad daylight and after a long and fruitless night. Why would an experienced fisherman like Simon Peter take instruction from a carpenter,, a teacher, an itinerant preacher? What would Jesus know about fishing? Despite the unbelievable result, the Gospel story today is not about fishing for fish but rather fishing for people – Jesus chooses Simon Peter, his brother Andrew and his colleagues John and James as the first of his 12 apostles. Their mission is to begin to draw in the great catch of men, women and children who will find themselves caught in the nets which Jesus uses to bring in the great harvest of the Church in every age, including our own.

“Give it a go” and “try it out” are not only words of encouragement for our children. You and I also need that sort of gentle prodding as well. Fears and nervousness can frustrate all of us. We don’t want to feel awkward or silly. If life is a competition none of us wants to come second. We can also lack the will to put in the effort or try that bit harder. We can excuse ourselves, “that’s not for me” or “I tried that once and it didn’t work out”. But experience also tells us that if practice doesn’t make perfect it at least makes things that little bit better. And that includes everything from our expertise at sport to our work skills, our efforts in the kitchen, our family life and our role as a parent, and even our efforts at prayer.

School education introduces our children to all sorts of things – the word ‘education’ means ‘to draw out’ – education opens many doors in life. Education is not just job training – a good education seeks to create a well rounded person, an interesting person, a good citizen and a Catholic education strives to help our children grow as sons and daughters of God. But mum and dad will also remember that when their child was baptised the Church honoured them as the first and best educators of their children in everything, especially the ways of faith – awareness of God, faith and trust in him; children owe everything to their parents beginning with the gift of life. At home as our children grow, they learn many lessons – to be gentle, how to share, how to say sorry; they learn respect and constant lessons in obedience and cooperation. There are many lessons to be taught as our children – and we adults – learn that none of us is the centre of the world. It’s always good for mum and dad to remember that

children are like sponges – they soak in everything, including both good and bad example, our spoken and unspoken values; so much is learnt at the family table, as well as what our children learn from parents who walk in the footsteps of Christ and honour Sunday as the Lord’s Day beginning with Sunday Mass.

In the first reading today the Old Testament prophet Isaiah finds himself caught up in wonder and awe in the Temple at Jerusalem – a vision of angels, clouds of sweet incense, the majesty of the Word of God. Simon Peter’s encounter with Jesus is not in the Temple but at the seashore, amid fishing boats and nets, the tools of his trade. Here today we encounter God in his House. The day continues at home where God is present in the life we share together. And tomorrow at work and in all that we do. Loving God. Serving God. Seeing him present. “Give it a go” “try it out”.