



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ Telephone: 9401 6336

✉ glenhuntly@cam.org.au

💻 cam.org.au/glenhuntly

ABN: 70548 570 366

Homily at Mass 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – 9 February 2020

“Salt of the earth” is one of those every day expressions that has entered the language straight from the Gospel. We hear this expression used about someone, say, during a eulogy at a funeral, or perhaps when someone is being honoured for their service as a community leader, a local councilor, a long standing and hardworking committee member – perhaps a club president or group secretary. To be that “salt of the earth” means to be a humble and quiet worker, generous, good hearted, someone ready to take the initiative, to see a task through, someone reliable, committed, with a keen sense of duty, responsibility, service.

For us, salt is an every day thing. Along with pepper, salt goes into everything eg tomatoes, fish and chips. We’re taught to season food with salt and pepper on all the food shows on TV. Pepper is a spice. Salt brings out the taste and flavour of food. Until the invention of refrigeration salt was used as a preservative, and we still do that when we pickle meat or vegetables.

When he speaks of us as “salt” Jesus is calling you and me, his disciples, to be the sort of people who bring out the taste and flavour of the world around us, to preserve all that is good, beautiful, noble and truly human. Salted by the Gospel your life and mine is everything that it should be. Family life and marriage becomes a vocation of love. We understand daily work to have a purpose, we see even the smallest task as an act of service. Even sickness and ill health is valuable; life is a precious gift; death is a doorway to eternal life. When life loses this salt, everything quickly becomes meaningless, hope disappears, and in the dark words of the philosopher Jean Paul Satre, “hell is other people”.

“You are salt”. Jesus also says, “You are light” “Your light must shine in the sight of men, so that seeing your good works, they may give the praise to you Father in Heaven”.

Last weekend light went out of the lives of 2 families in Sydney when 4 young children – 3 from one family and a cousin were killed in a car accident, run over as they walked along the footpath on their way to buy an ice cream on a warm evening. Can we imagine the sadness and loss their parents feel? What must it be like to walk into the house, to walk from room to room and see 3 empty beds; to sit down to eat and see 3 empty chairs at the table, to open a wardrobe and see their clothes, to look at family photos, to see their sports trophies?

But in this darkness these 2 families have shone in incredible light. The children’s parents have visited the accident site, and prayed with others – friends and strangers – especially the prayer of the Rosary. “My family life was my full time job” the father told the media “my other work was just part time”. What a testimony to a parent’s role and a father’s love! The children’s mother told the media she cannot hate the driver who killed her 3 and their cousin; “I think in my heart to forgive him ... I am sad, I am heart broken, but I am at peace. I know my kids are in a better place”. Pressed on whether she hated the driver, the mother said “I am not going to hate him, because that’s not who we are, that’s not what our religion tells us”. Both families belong to the Maronite Catholic community in Sydney.

This family is like so many others, countless Australians who place the bright light of faith at the heart of their home and family life, “on the lamp stand where it shines for everyone”. Our Sunday Mass keeps the light sustained and burning brightly. The light of Christ shines in a home where there is a crucifix and an image of Our Lady on the wall. Children grow in the light as they learn lessons of prayer, faith, charity, forgiveness, generosity, patience, kindness, selflessness from mum and dad and grandma and grandpa too. Did St Mary MacKillop learn from her mother what she often said to her sisters: “Never see a need without trying to do something about it”?