



The Parish of Saints Anthony & Aloysius

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Homily at Mass 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B – 2 September 2018

Happy Fathers Day! Days like Fathers Day and Mothers Day are nice traditions in our society – they remind us of the goodness of family life, and our relationships with one another. Fathers Day and Mothers Day also remind us of all that we owe to our parents – without them none of us would be here; as we get older, and with our experience of being a mum and dad too, we begin to think of all that our parents have done for us, their generosity, their self giving, their hard work, their worries for us, their many sacrifices, giving each of us a good education and opportunities in life that perhaps they never had.

Our younger parishioners – especially our Uni students – are perhaps very aware of all that mum and dad are doing to support and help them now, today.

Social traditions like Mothers Day and Fathers Day. Family traditions like how we celebrate birthdays or Christmas. For us, tradition is not a foreign word or a dity word. The Catholic Church is especially aware of her Tradition.

There are small ‘t’ traditions in Church life – certain long standing customs or practices in a local parish or a religious community. The way that the clergy dress, the titles ‘father’, ‘sister’, ‘monsignor’, many fast days and feast days – all of these things are part of the Church’s small ‘t’ tradition.

Capital ‘t’ traditions include the Scriptures, the ways we celebrate the liturgy which we see in our parish – the long Tradition of the so called Tridentine Mass, as well as the form of Mass that is more familiar to most of us, such as this celebration now. Celibacy for bishops and priests, the essentials for the celebration of the sacraments – these things and many others flow down to us like a mighty river from Christ and the Apostles and the life of the first Christians. The Catholic Church didn’t come down in the last shower. The Catholic Church is a living breathing community of men and women, embracing 2000 + years of human experience, human insight, human achievement, human mistakes, all of it drawing on faith, hope and love, study, writing and reflection, prayer, worship and works of charity that have made our world what it is today.

Christians have a long tradition of giving and self-giving. Our Parish Stewardship Renewal is focussing our minds on this vital and necessary aspect of Catholic life. St James notes for us one or two aspects of “pure, unspoilt religion”: coming to the help of widows and orphans. Care for the poor, reaching out to the needy is characteristic of christian life – and a good local expression of it in our parish is Tony’s Café, as well as the day by day generosity and care of good neighbours.

The English writer G K Chesterton was asked by a friend what he thought about life in the Catholic Church after his conversion in 1922. He said that the one thing that struck him was that the Catholic Church is much bigger on the inside than she appears on the outside. An outsider sees just buildings – churches, schools, halls, hospitals, perhaps the Pope, bishops, priests. But on the inside, what do we see? We see a community of faith – the People of God. We see the Word of God proclaimed, preached, lived. We see the Eucharist and other sacraments – intimate meetings with God our Creator and Father, Jesus our friend and Lord, the Holy Spirit, fire, love, the breath of God. We see works of justice and mercy, we see the mission of Catholic education and Catholic healthcare, we see selfless parents, and our children and young people growing in faith. We see Tradition – a living thing that nourishes our life, teaches us the way of prayer, and gives us the hope of eternal life in the daily experience, effort and struggles of this life each day.