



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

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Homily at Mass 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C – 3 February 2019

Today we find ourselves once again in the Church for Sunday Mass. Would we want to be anywhere else on Sunday, the Lord's Day? Jesus, a devout and faithful Jew attended the synagogue each Saturday. The same ceremony he attended continues in the synagogues here in our area: the reading of the Scriptures, a sermon, prayer in common. Since the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, Christians have always celebrated the joy of Sunday, the Easter that returns week by week. The Fathers of the Church speak of Sunday as the "8th Day – a day that stands out from all the rest, a day that frees us from work, so that we can worship God, remember that God is Father and Creator, and feel ourselves refreshed, renewed, re-created. On Sunday we "touch base" with Christ the Risen Lord and with his holy people, God's family and ours the Church. At Sunday Mass we drink deeply from the fresh water of the Word of God; we share in the fresh food and drink of eternal life, a taste of Heaven. Waking up on Monday morning we're ready to face the week, to face the world, to face work and all that will come our way: we are not alone, Christ our God is with us – always.

Sometimes our Christian outlook is welcome in our conversations with others. But often these days in Australia it isn't. Many of us recall the 1960's and the "Sex Revolution". Since then we've seen the world and Australian society change, we could say, out of all recognition, even including Church life, school education, the character and good name of priests, things now legal which at one time weren't even spoken of; even words like 'gay', 'equality', 'diversity', 'marriage', 'partner', 'family now carry such meaning, that you need to think twice before you open your mouth. As time goes by our Christian outlook, our values, our morality presents more and more of a challenge not only for ourselves to embrace and live, but for our fellow Australians to tolerate if not accept.

St John sums up Our Lord's experience at the synagogue in Nazareth this way: "he came amongst his own and his own accepted him not". We've probably experienced this ourselves at family gatherings, or even conversations with neighbours, colleagues, friends. St Francis de Sales was appointed Bishop of Geneva Switzerland in 1602. Part of his mission was to win back to the Catholic Church many Swiss who had embraced the new Calvinist religion. The new bishop's task was not easy, but he tried day by day, looking for ways to touch people's hearts, to speak to their minds, to show all the warmth of our Mother the Catholic Church. It took time, patience, kindness, gentleness. St Francis used to say you can do more with a spoon of honey than a cup of vinegar. St Paul encourages all of us in much the same way today in his famous hymn to love. Let's listen to it again:

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.