



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ Telephone: (03) 9401 6336

✉ glenhuntly@cam.org.au

www.cam.org.au/glenhuntly

ABN: 70548 570 366

Homily at Mass 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C – 25 August 2019

At Mass each Sunday you and I make a huge commitment – a huge personal commitment – when we recite the Creed. We’ll do it again today in a few minutes time. “I believe” – “I believe in God, Father and Creator”. “I believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Mary, crucified and risen”. “I believe in the Holy Spirit”. “I believe in the Church”. “I believe in baptism, the forgiveness of sins, life everlasting”.

Today someone asks Jesus: “will there be only a few saved”. Despite the fact that so many live as if God does not exist, or if the thought of life after death rarely if ever crosses anyone’s mind, that question will not go away. The question of death and eternal life, heaven and hell perhaps doesn’t concern us much in our younger years, but as we grow older and our experience of life grows, perhaps the death of parents, even the experience of becoming a mum and dad and presenting our children for Baptism – all of these things can make us think about the meaning and purpose of life, what is life about, does all that I do count for anything, why pray, why take the Gospel seriously, why come to Mass on Sunday, why not just go with the flow, why strive for holiness?

Today both the Old Testament prophet Isaiah and Jesus in the Gospel present us with a grand vision of countless people, men and women from north, south, east and west, from distant islands and every nation making their way to the Lord’s holy mountain – not the earthly city of Jerusalem, but to the eternal city, the new Jerusalem, the feast in the kingdom of God. Can we see this spectacular procession in our minds – people of every race, language, nation dressed in colourful costumes, waving flags, singing, joyful, triumphant! What comes to mind – perhaps the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, or the vast crowds squeezed into St Peter’s Square in Rome. Men and women, young and old, small children and young people: this is the church of God, this is the Church we profess faith in once again today: “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”.

The Church is a community of salvation because we are the community of the baptised. Baptism brings us into the kingdom of God. Baptism set us on the path to Heaven. Baptism immerses us into Christ’s death and resurrection. Baptism gives us new life, eternal life, the life of Christ, the life of Heaven. Baptism brings us into the Church.

The Church is one – the unity of the church is found in Christ: we are parts of one Body – Christ is the Head of the Body, we – all of us – are its vital and necessary members. Each of us plays our unique and irreplaceable part in the life and mission of the Church. Every family is a key unit or cell of the Body of Christ. Mum and dad and grand parents too are vital links in the chain which passes on the tradition of faith, prayer, Catholic life. The Catholic Church is not made up of hundreds of little churches or national churches – we are one family, one holy people, one great community of faith, prayer, worship, service, mission.

The Church is holy. The Church is holy because Jesus Christ is the all holy, Christ's holiness is revealed in the saints, beginning with Our Lady: *tota pulchra es* Pope John Paul II would often say about Mary: "you are all holy ... all beautiful ... all lovely, O Virgin Mary, Mother of God". We touch the holy in our celebration of the sacraments – we grow in the holiness of Christ with every Confession, every Holy Communion; the Sacraments of Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders equip us with grace and calls each of us to heroic and courageous holiness. Our daily prayer is one of the holiest things we do each day.

The Church is Catholic – this is the unity the world is called to by God. The vast procession of men and women from north, south, east and west find a home in the Catholic Church – gathered into God's fatherly arms, gathered beneath the cross of Christ, sharing one faith, one hope, embracing one another in one love. When we hear this we feel pride and thanks that God has called us into his Church. We also feel sorry that there is still so much division between those who believe in Christ, those who profess belief in God, and those still feeling their way, searching, perhaps lost, struggling, empty. St Augustine famously prayed: "You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you".

The Church is Apostolic – this is what we sang in the psalm today "Go out to all the world and tell the good news: apostolic – we stand on the Twelve Jesus chose to be his apostles. Men and women in every age sent on mission. This is our task, our call wherever we are: at home at work, amongst friends. Do you find that sometimes words fail you? Be confident! People can recognize the Gospel when they see it: your peaceful, demeanour, your ready generosity, your kindness and friendship, your work ethic, small acts of service, attention to detail, a sense of responsibility, justice, compassion.

St Francis once said: "preach the Gospel always – use words only if necessary".