



# The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ Telephone: 9401 6336

✉ [glenhuntly@cam.org.au](mailto:glenhuntly@cam.org.au)

🌐 [cam.org.au/glenhuntly](http://cam.org.au/glenhuntly)

ABN: 70548 570 366

---

## Homily at Mass 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C – 27 October 2019

St Luke certainly knows how to recount the parables of Jesus. St Luke writes in such a way that we can see all that he describes comes to life in our minds, before our eyes. Two men find their way to the Temple. The Pharisee occupies centre stage: can you see him, standing tall, his head erect, his voice confident, listing off his virtues? But notice what St Luke says about his prayer: “he said this prayer **to himself**”. The Pharisee’s prayer was not conversation with God, but a proud and boastful account, a monologue, a gaze into a mirror that reflected his own features, his own image, back to himself.

Meanwhile, having crept in through the back entrance of the temple, the tax collector takes his place, quite a distance away from the Pharisee, perhaps in the shadows. St Luke tells us that this man dared not lift his eyes to heaven. Rather he looked at himself and saw few reasons for pride. Rather he saw what you and I see when we look into the mirror. Speaking from the heart, the tax collector makes this honest and humble prayer: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner”.

Five children make their First Holy Communion at 11am Mass this weekend. We look at them, we see their innocence, their joy, their simple faith. They make us look at ourselves, as we think back to the day of our First Holy Communion. We were just like them: perhaps 8 or 9 years of age. Like them, mum and dad had welcomed us with tremendous love and happiness when we were born; and with great love and faith they brought us in their arms to the Church and held us over the font to be baptised. At home, as we grew and then at school we began to learn the ways of faith and prayer, and the habit of Sunday Mass. Like our children, we too made steps in Catholic life: Baptism ... First Reconciliation ... First Holy Communion ... Confirmation. As adults we look back on our childhood and upbringing, our education and the many sacrifices mum and dad made for us, and all that we can say is “thank you”.

First Holy Communion has always been a pivotal moment in the life of a young Catholic. Napoleon regarded his First Holy Communion day as the greatest day of his life. St Therese of Lisieux remembered kneeling in her place after her First Holy Communion and asking Jesus: “Lord, tell me what you want me to do”. For our children their First Holy Communion is the first of a lifetime of regular meetings with Christ, their Friend and Lord. All of us can tell our children how faithful a Friend the Lord Jesus is: week by week, Sunday by Sunday, year after year, Jesus gives himself to us as a gift and food to sustain us and make his home in us always.

What a great gift the Eucharist is! And yet how simple, almost every day and commonplace, the signs of the Eucharist are: just bread, wine, the simplest of foods. When we look at the Eucharist we see not bread and wine, no mere reminder of Jesus, but rather the Lord Jesus himself: his Body and Blood. In the moment of Holy Communion the Church seeks an act of faith from us: “The Body of Christ” “Amen” we say. Yes – a yes of faith, a heartfelt yes, a yes of the whole of myself to all that the Eucharist is, all that Jesus is, all that the Church is, God’s Holy People, and the life, joy and promise of all that the Eucharist points to: the great and unending banquet of Heaven. “The one who says Amen”, says St Augustine, “writes his signature”.

At the very beginning of Mass, the Church gathers us, God's Family, into God's House. We begin to act together – we sing, we make the sign of the Cross, the Holy Spirit begins to move in us and we respond; we pray, we reflect and listen in silence; we lift our hearts in prayer, praise, thanksgiving. First of all we stand in the shoes of the tax collector – for we come to God's House with the dust of the road on our feet, not as the community of the perfect, but poor and honest sinners in need of a God of mercy.

I read during the week that to become holy is to grow bit by bit in perfect love. Are any of us there yet? How much we need God. How much we need the mercy of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. How much we need our Family, God's Holy People. How much we need Sunday, the Lord's Day, our weekly Easter Day. How much we need Jesus in his Eucharist.