



Homily - Sesquicentenary Celebration of St Mary's Cathedral

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Archbishop of Perth

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth
Thursday 29 January 2015

Readings Hebrews 10:19-25; Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Mark 4:21-25

The words of today's first reading speak to us very beautifully of the attitudes of mind and heart which we are called to allow to grow within us as we enter the sanctuary of God. For that reason, they are especially appropriate for us today as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first cathedral church built on the site on which our beautiful Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception now stands. We know that, as people especially chosen by God and called together into a community of faith in order to proclaim the goodness of God to all people, it is the way we behave which will speak more powerfully of the love of God alive in us than our words, or even than the magnificence of the churches and cathedrals we build.

The Letter to the Hebrews puts it very simply, and this should not surprise us for our faith is not meant to be something complicated and sophisticated. Jesus, after all, did not say blessed are the intelligent and the powerful: rather, he said, blessed are the humble and the poor of spirit. And so, today, we are invited to take very seriously the simple words of the Letter to the Hebrews: let us be concerned for each other, to stir up a response in love and good works.

What the writer of this letter is reminding us is that, if we treat others with love and concern, we will draw out of them the very best that lies within them. Cardinal Newman, now Blessed John Henry Newman, understood this well when he chose for his motto "heart speaks to heart". When we love others from the heart, we are leading them into the mystery of love and calling forth love from their own hearts. Our love for them teaches them to love in return. This, of course, is exactly what Jesus asks of us: love one another, He says to us, as I have loved you.

But the Letter to the Hebrews also encourages us not to stay away from the meetings of the community. We might express that today in the words, "do not stay away from the celebration of the Eucharist". It is only to the extent that we open ourselves to the wisdom of God's word, and the example of our brothers and sisters in the faith, and especially the gift of the Lord to us in Holy Communion, all of which happens when we celebrate the Eucharist, that we can really be brother and sister to those who share our faith, and to those who do not. Without the Lord's grace, we will struggle, in fact, to really be concerned, deeply and consistently, for each other. Our selfishness will get in the way and all the good we could have done for others will remain undone.



For 150 years, faithful Catholics have been making the journey to this hill on the outskirts of the city to share their faith, to open themselves to God's word, to be drawn into a deep communion of love with Him, and to respond to His call to take what they have received within these walls out into the world of their family, their neighbourhood, their job, their community. It is this fidelity and faith we are really celebrating today. And, of course, we hear the same call today. That call, that voice of the Lord, has drawn us here today and that same call, that same voice, sends us out to share the joy of our faith, the *Evangelii Gaudium*, with everyone we meet.

How grateful we must be to those early pioneers who had the courage to build the first cathedral church on this site. How grateful we must be to those who, over so many years, have continued to build and develop this Cathedral. And how grateful we must be to those who are responsible for the magnificent building in which we find ourselves today and which we are so proud to call our Cathedral.

The Cathedral, of course, is dedicated to Our Lady under the title of her Immaculate Conception. So, too, is our Archdiocese. Today, I invite you to join with me once more as we place our Cathedral and our diocese under the protection of Mary's prayers. As we do so often, let us now ask her to pray for us, at this present time, in the future which lies ahead of us, and at the hour of our death.

Hail Mary ...