



## **Chrism Mass 2018**

### **HOMILY**

**By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth**

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth  
Tuesday 27 March 2018

I would like to begin this evening by thanking each one of you who has gathered here in the Cathedral to celebrate the wonderful gift which the Lord has given to his Church in the sacramental life we all enjoy. As Catholics we believe very firmly that the sacraments are, in a special way, privileged moments of encounter with the Lord in which we give the little that we have to God and God, in return, gives himself to us. This is something worth celebrating and it is wonderful that so many people have gathered to thank God for his gifts.

In particular tonight the Church invites us to concentrate on those sacraments of initiation, of healing and of commitment which we celebrate with the use of the sacred oil which I will bless and consecrate during this Mass. In coming among us as one of us in Jesus, God has shown that he seeks to encounter us not in spite of the things, and people, he has created, but rather in and through the things, and the people, he has created. We use such things as water, bread and wine, words and gestures, and the oil we set aside tonight, as visible signs of God's love of his creation and of God's determination to enter into a very real, concrete communion with us. And so, tonight, we bless the oil we will use for the anointing of the sick and the oil we will use for the anointing of those preparing for baptism, and we consecrate the sacred chrism, the oil used in the sacraments of baptism, of confirmation and of priestly and episcopal ordination. In doing so we affirm our belief in the constant, never failing grace of God who comes to us in all our moments of joy and sorrow and pours out his love upon us. And of course we do all this within the celebration of the Eucharist, the central sacrament of our faith, which draws us into communion with the Lord and with each other, and deepens and strengthens that communion.

I also want to thank you all for coming to celebrate with our priests as they, as we, solemnly renew our commitment to our priesthood. Everyone here in the Cathedral knows that through our baptism the Lord forms us all into the one priestly people of God. We offer our lives to God, just as God, in Jesus, offered his life to and for us. And just as the life of Jesus was offered for the sake of others, so our lives are offered to God for the sake of others. For most of you, this offering will be made for the sake of your wife or husband, your children and your families. For those of you who remain single through choice or circumstance, your offering of your life may still be for your family, or your friends, and those whom God places in your life and whom you recognise as the ones you are called to love and to serve. But because the Lord knows how challenging it is to always live lives of self-giving and faithful service, he calls men to the ordained ministry so that through them he, Jesus, might continue to be present among us as the healer, as the teacher, as the shepherd, and as the servant leader. Tonight we celebrate and thank God for the gift of the ordained ministry, and for the gift of our ordained ministers, for the ministry is only realised in the



ministers, each one different, with a variety of gifts and talents, each with his own struggles and failings, but each called by God, graced by God and loved by God.

The vocation to the priesthood is a beautiful one, as all Christian callings are, and a difficult and daunting one, as all Christian callings are. At this particular time in our history, in relation to the vocation to the priesthood, the dreadful and destructive failings of the few have caused great shame in our Church and not least among our priests. The fact that, in spite of this, these men, and here they are, continue day after day to give themselves generously and faithfully to us, and that young men continue to respond with enthusiasm to the call to the priesthood in our archdiocese, is a sign of God's continued presence at the heart of the Church. It is equally a sign of the generous openness to God's grace which is at the heart of the lives of our priests.

Tonight I want to ask all of you to join me in praying with our priests, in praying for our priests, and in supporting, encouraging, understanding and loving our priests. We know that we simply cannot be the Church God is calling us to be without them. We know that in them we experience the constant, faithful and life-giving presence of the Good Shepherd among us. We know that through them we receive and can rejoice in the limitless compassion and forgiveness of our heavenly Father. We know too, of course, that they like us are human, subject to the same limitations as the rest of us, as much labouring under the power of failure and frailty as we all are. So of course was Simon Peter, who loved the Lord passionately but who still constantly misunderstood him, failed him, and even, at the end, disowned him. Peter's failures and his frailty did not stop the Lord from commissioning him to feed the lambs and look after the sheep. Jesus did so because, in the end, Peter could affirm with passionate conviction, *"Yes, Lord I love you, of course I love you. You know everything so you know I love you."*

Please pray for all our priests, and for me and Bishop Don, that like Peter we too, for your sake, can speak from the depths of our hearts and say to the Lord, *"Yes, Lord, I love you."* We want to be the priests you need us to be and God is calling us to be. Please help us.