



Rite of Election

Homily

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

**Thursday 14 March 2019
St Mary's Cathedral Perth**

My first duty tonight is to welcome all of you here to the Cathedral and to thank you for being here. I especially welcome, of course, our catechumens and our candidates for full communion with the Church. Your courage and your faith are a source of encouragement for all of us. In the midst of the terrible scandals which continue to confront the Catholic community, your decision to become one with us reminds us that the Church, in spite of the failures and the infidelity of so many of its members, still remains a source of life and of hope because the Church, before it is anything else, is a community of disciples of Christ. In seeking to join us, you are joining a community of people who know that we are called to fix our eyes on his face, open our ears to his words, and set our feet on the path he lays out for us.

It is this conviction that led me, when I became the Archbishop of Perth eight years ago, to choose as my motto three Latin words which you can find at the bottom of my coat of arms. The words are *Via*, *Veritas* and *Vita*. They are the words Jesus uses to describe himself in Saint John's gospel. "I am the Way, the '*Via*'", he says. "I am the Truth, the '*Veritas*'. And I am the Life, the '*Vita*'".

To become a Christian, or to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church, is really to say that you want to, and intend to, take Jesus at his word. Everything about the life of the Church is meant to help us live as real disciples of Jesus who know that while others might wonder which path to take in life, which way to follow, we intend to follow him, to walk in his way. Life in the Church is meant to help us, when we wonder who or what to believe about ourselves, about each other, about our place in the world and about the real meaning of our lives, to commit ourselves to Jesus and to his truth. And life in the Church is meant to gradually shape us into people who see with his eyes, and listen with his ears, and speak with his words and love with his heart - in other words to live with his life. St Paul once expressed this very well when he said, "I am no longer living, for it is Christ who lives in me".

This is what the Church is for and when the Church is at its best this is what it does. The Church is not always at its best, as we are all painfully aware. Jesus himself knew this would be the case. It is why he spoke so often and so strongly to his first disciples about the need to have forgiveness at the heart of their lives together. Nothing has changed. We Catholics will continue to sometimes let each other down. We will continue to lose our way, and become confused about what is true, and fail to let Christ live in us. But even in the midst of our failures and infidelities we will know,



through our life in the Church, what we are called to, what God is asking of us, and how to find our way back home.

In seeking to join the Catholic Church you are therefore joining a very human community, a very fragile community and at times perhaps a very uninspiring community. Try not to become disillusioned or discouraged. This human, fragile, uninspiring community has its eyes fixed on Jesus, its hopes pinned on Jesus, and its trust placed in Jesus. He never gave up on his first group of disciples most of whom failed him badly and often. He hasn't given up on his Church today and nor will he in the future. You are joining us on our pilgrim journey as we do our best follow in the footsteps of our Good Shepherd. You will be very welcome among us.