



## **Catholic Education Annual Commissioning Mass Homily**

**By the Most Rev Don Sproxtton  
Auxiliary Bishop of Perth**

St Jerome's Parish, Munster  
Thursday 12 February, 2015

We are celebrating the beginning of our year together, just days before the spectacle in Perth of the Giants. Those awesome puppets will stride around the city as stories will be told of the Aboriginal people and their dreaming stories, and about the great convoy that left Albany and the horrible story of Gallipoli.

The theatre of the Giants will be helpful in teaching our young people something of the aspirations and faith of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, just as they will recall the personal story of the little daughter of the lighthouse keeper in Albany who saw the last of the ships steam over the horizon on their way to Egypt in 1914.

One hundred years ago, our young country began to be known on the international stage through the remarkable impact its soldiers made on some of the great battles of the Great War. Australians have seen the Gallipoli campaign and the war in France and Belgium as the crucibles through which we have become aware of our nationhood and place in the world. Today, we are more assured as a nation. We are a different nation, more complex, multicultural, yet proud of our nation and ready to learn from the experiences of the past so that a better society results.

The Commissioning Ceremony this afternoon is our way of welcoming teachers and staff to Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Perth. You were asked to be daily witnesses to the Gospel and to be at the service of the students in your care while contributing to the welfare of your fellow staff members and the school community. The commissioning included a prayer of blessing from us all, reminding us that none of us is alone, for we have the presence of the divine spirit and the presence of colleagues around us.

When Jesus began His work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth, His first step was to invite others to walk with Him. These were the first disciples. They needed to journey with Him in order to learn who He was and what He stood for. Their discipleship was meant to equip them to become witnesses to Christ and the new people of God. Most of them became marvellous witnesses of how to be Christian.

As they journeyed with Jesus, they discovered in Him huge capacities for living in simplicity, for compassion, for treating people with dignity and gentleness, for justice and mercy, and how to work for peace, even when facing opposition. But more fascinating was their discovery that they were becoming able to do these things themselves, simply because they had lived with Jesus.



The disciples also noticed that Jesus required time to be alone with God in prayer. They realised that the communion between Jesus and the Father was critical. Jesus had been sent by the Father so that the kingdom of freedom and peace would be established and be available to all people, releasing humanity from the domination by evil. Jesus needed to be faithful to the mission He was sent to complete. For this, He would seek the time to be with the Father and to check that He was being faithful to the plan of the Father.

In Catholic Education, we are called to be a light that enters into the lives of students, families and colleagues and makes a huge difference. The light is Christ. We are not the light but we are to let Him shine through our actions and words. In our schools, we have the great privilege and responsibility to touch the lives of others with the spirit of the Lord.

We believe that we have something distinctive to offer the school community. This comes from walking with Jesus, learning who He is and what He stands for, reflecting on this, drawing on the gifts He offers for us to grow in the capacity to serve and be the light bearers.

We need to create the space in our lives for that communion with Jesus and the Father where our reflection on the mission and our work can occur. Our call to be disciples and to make disciples of Christ will be checked in that space of prayer.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there will be Giants walking the streets of Perth and they will draw thousands to their spectacle. Much will be learnt and marvelled at as they pass by the young people. Let us become giants of the faith for our young people, passing on what we have learnt of Christ and how to be His disciples.