



## **2017 Rite of Election Homily**

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

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth  
Thursday 9 March, 2017

Every year, as we gather together for his wonderful celebration, we formally welcome all those people who, responding to the Spirit of God at work in their lives, step forward to express their desire to become part of the Catholic community here in our Archdiocese. I am always amazed at the courage and the faith which this decision represents. Tonight, we are in the presence of people who have, in so many different ways, listened to the Word of God, the voice of the Lord calling them to take this step, and who, having heard this voice, have determined to respond to it.

In many ways you are living examples of the spirit of faith with which Mary, the Mother of Jesus, responded to the call of God in her own life. At one stage during the ministry of Jesus a woman in the crowd cried out to him, *"Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that suckled you."* Jesus responded in a very powerful way. *"Blessed rather"*, he said, *"are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice."* This is of course exactly what Mary did all through her own life. While the Church honours her because she was the mother of the saviour, we honour her much more because of her faith, her fidelity and her love for Jesus. We cannot imitate her in her motherhood of the saviour, but we can imitate her in her faith and in her discipleship. And all of you, candidates and members of the Elect, are doing precisely that. So let me say to you, this evening, *blessed are you who have heard the word of God in your lives and are putting that word into practice by your presence here this evening and by the commitments you will make at Easter.*

To enter into the Catholic community is to enter a community which, of course, has Jesus at its heart. We believe that God is calling us to walk together in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, to encourage and strengthen each other by the example of our lived faith, and to be together a living sign that Jesus is with us and that, through us, he wishes to reach out to the whole world. Each one of us of course will do that in our own circumstances and according to our own gifts and possibilities. But as a community of faith we know that we will not do it alone: we will do it in communion with our brothers and sisters.

It is because our faith is centred on Jesus that we often speak of ourselves as a Eucharistic community. One of the joys you will each experience as you enter into the fullness of our community is the joy of receiving the Lord in Holy Communion at the Easter Mass. As Catholics we know that when the priest or special minister holds before us the consecrated host and says, quite simply, *"the body of Christ"* those words are not an empty figure of speech but an expression of the truth about what we doing. We are responding to the Lord who invites us to receive him, in a deeply personal way, into our lives. The Lord we receive is the one who at the Last Supper took bread, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, *"Take this all of you and eat it, for this is*



*my body which is given, broken, for you.”* The Lord we receive is the one who at the Last Supper took the chalice and said, *“Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood which will be poured out for you.”* And the Lord we receive is the one who at the Last Supper then said, *“Do this in memory of me”*. We enter into the communion of the Church, and as members of the Church receive Holy Communion in the Church, because this is what Jesus invites us to do. He gives us his body and blood, and seeks to be one with us in a communion of love through the Eucharist, because he wants us and needs us to give our lives, to break our bodies and pour out our life-blood, so that we can be life-givers for others, as he is life-giving for us. By entering into the communion of the Church we deepen day by day our communion with the Lord. Through us, living now in communion with him, the Lord can reach into the lives and hearts of all the people we encounter – our families, our friends, our colleagues, our neighbours, and all those others who are a part of the fabric of our lives.

The gift of faith we are celebrating tonight, and which is so powerfully seen in the courage of our candidates and the Elect, is therefore always a gift given not just for ourselves but for others. God has chosen us, from all those he could have chosen, to be the ones through whom he becomes present in our world. May our candidates and the elect find in our communities of faith encouragement, support and strength for the journey they are embracing. And may we all be, like Mary, people who hear the Word of God and then put it into practice.