



## **Memorial Mass for H.E. Francesca Tardioli**

### **Homily**

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

**Tuesday, 1 March 2022  
St Mary's Cathedral, Perth**

We have gathered here in the Cathedral this evening in shock and in sorrow to pray for the eternal repose of Her Excellency Francesca Tardioli, who died so tragically and unexpectedly at her home in Foligno in Italy. Although I presume that Ambassador Tardioli was not known personally to many of you, she is so closely associated with your homeland, and its close ties to Australia, that her death will be felt deeply by a great many of you. The ambassador was described by the Australian ambassador to Italy, Margaret Twomey, as one of the greatest gifts of Italy to Australia. It is clear that she will be very much missed here in Australia, and of course, by her family, her friends and her colleagues in Italy.

We have gathered in this Cathedral tonight not just in shock and in sorrow but also in faith. Our Catholic faith is deeply rooted in your homeland and the Church here in Australia has been immeasurably enriched by the presence of so many faithful Catholics who have made Australia their home. It is a testament to the strength of this faith that the Italian Consul to Western Australia, Signor Nicolo' Costantini, on hearing of the tragic death of the Ambassador, thought immediately of the need to provide an opportunity for the Italian community here in Western Australia, and especially in Perth, to gather together to mourn and to pray.

When death comes tragically and unexpectedly it is natural for us to seek explanations and some understanding of what happened. Such explanations are not always easy to come by and it may take some time for all of you to come to terms with the shock and sorrow that you feel. At the same time, sudden and unexpected deaths also confront us with the reality of our own mortality and we may find ourselves reflecting on the fragility of life. This is certainly the case for many of us as we witness the terrible events unfolding in Ukraine and tonight I would like to ask you all, in the midst of your sorrow over the death of the Italian Ambassador, to also keep the people of Ukraine in your prayers. So many people there, too, will be experiencing the shock and sorrow of sudden death. We must not forget them.

When we as Christians gather for a Mass for someone who has died we do so first and foremost to entrust that person to God's love and mercy. This is especially true for us as Catholics. We have a deep belief in the bonds of communion and unity which tie us all together. We know and believe that the prayers we offer for one who has died are never pointless, never without meaning,



and never of no help to those for whom we pray. God has made us to care for each other, to look after each other, and to support each other in every way we can - and we believe that God will hear our prayers for those who have died. As they pass through the gates of death and encounter God "face to face" they go with the support of our prayers and of our love. They do not go alone.

Her Excellency, Francesca Tardioli, represented her country in many parts of the world before coming to Australia. As member of Italy's diplomatic corps she has lived a life of service: service to her own country and, at the same time, service to the countries she has lived and worked in. We can, I believe, be confident that in doing so she has represented a country which continues to be steeped in the kinds of values which are expressed in tonight's gospel, the values of the beatitudes.

These values represent, in a way, a kind of blueprint for a life well-lived. They speak of the importance of being "poor in spirit", focusing, in other words, on the things which really matter: gentleness rather than aggressiveness, compassion rather than insensitivity, a desire for justice and mercy rather than for revenge, a love for purity of heart rather than for self-serving domination over others, a readiness to work for peace rather than for division and hatred, and a determination to stand up for what is right, not matter the cost. For a country like Italy, it is these values which lie at the heart of everything, at least ideally if not always fully in reality. And for that reason it is these values which, in one way or another, would have been at the very centre of the life and work of Francesca Tardioli.

Tonight we thank God for the life of service and dedication which Ambassador Tardioli has lived. We pray for her family, her friends, her colleagues and all those who will mourn her loss, that they may find comfort in each other and in their Christian and Catholic faith. And, most importantly of all, we pray that as Francesca Tardioli passes through the gates of death and into the mystery of eternal life she might be given in full the joy and peace of seeing God face to face and living forever in him.

L'eterno riposo dona a lei, O Signore, e fa' risplendere su di lei la luce perpetua. Possa riposare in pace. Amen