



Funeral Mass of Brother Pat Kelly Homily

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St Patrick's Basilica, Fremantle

Brother Pat became a companion to me as we attended the Catholic Education Commission meetings together. Often, we would sit together and share our ideas on Catholic education. I learnt so much from his wisdom and his wide experience, gained from living in so many communities and working in a variety of places.

Br Brian Clery has told us of the conversion that took place in Pat's life when he was in his forties. I came to know him after this event, so I will speak about how I experienced him as he was putting Christ more intentionally into the centre of his life.

Pat was, for those who encountered him, a disciple of Christ. He walked with people of all backgrounds as a brother. Pat believed that things can be made better for those whose lives have been damaged or who were in circumstances of disadvantage.

Echoes of Pat's belief and actions are to be found in the message given by Pope Francis on the World Day of Peace this year. The Pope alerted us to the threat we face as people around the world become indifferent to the plight of the poor and disadvantaged. World peace itself is put at risk, Francis writes, by the growth of indifference.

Indifference to God and to the spiritual in modern life gradually has an impact on the other relationships we have with our neighbours.

Francis wrote on some of the forms indifference takes today. It is seen when people allow themselves to only vaguely acknowledge the tragedies that are being faced by humanity, but will not become involved or show compassion. Their sensibilities become dulled.

Indifference is evident when we intentionally block out what is happening to others. We can find comfort in not asking questions because, then, we don't have to seek out the answers.

Francis sees how indifference leads to self-absorption and a lack of commitment.

In Pat's case, we know he could abide none of this. The Gospel that has been chosen for our liturgy today is from the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. It was chosen purposefully. Pat walked as a companion with so many others. We need only look through the huge number of death notices in the newspaper to realise just how many those people were and how diverse were their situations. Pat walked with people, convinced that change is possible, and that God



could use him to assist in a change for the better for a person in need. He believed that God can work the miracle of reversal in our lives. His own experience reinforced this belief.

The Beatitudes begin the great Sermon on the Mount. Each has two parts. The first presents the humiliations we experience in the present. The second part raises our hope as we hear about the glory that will be ours in the future, if we persevere walking with Jesus.

Another thing about the Beatitudes is that they are not addressed to everyone indiscriminately. They were directed to only those who follow Christ, those who have left everything to follow Christ. Someone once wrote, They are the poor in spirit who have left everything, including those things that give us a sense of security and self-preservation. They are poor in spirit, as well, when the disciples of Christ realise that they are the spiritual have-nots. This is humiliation, to realise our poverty of spirit. Disciples need Christ, they need the Spirit of God to fill them with the grace they cannot conjure for themselves.

The disciples of Christ see very clearly that they are not righteous, so they seek the righteousness of God and are justified by Him alone.

Pat was a man of the Beatitudes. He shared the insight of St Paul: Faith, if genuine, works through love.

As we remember Pat and his way of being one who walked with others, let us marvel at this Christian who sought to respond with great commitment to the needs of his brothers and sisters for the sake of Jesus. He did so while learning how to convert and to put Christ at the centre of his life. We pray for him, in charity, that Jesus will make up for anything lacking in Pat, so he will soon be in the position to work with love for us in paradise.