



Easter Mass

Homily

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Auxiliary Bishop of Perth**

Mirrabooka Parish, St Gerard Majella Catholic Church
Sunday 21 April, 2019

The liturgy of the baptism, as we have heard already, is at the heart of our celebration tonight. I attended the other ceremonies at St Mary's Cathedral over the past weekend and it occurred to me that there is really one liturgy that covers these three days.

How He started of course, was with the Liturgy celebrating the institution of the Eucharist. That liturgy embraced the moment when Jesus gave us a great sign on how to be there for each other and how to love each other, in the washing of the feet. We move into the next part of the liturgy which was Good Friday. We finish the Good Friday liturgy at the tomb. Tonight we gathered outside around the fire and I imagined that the disciples might have visited the tomb many times after the burial of Jesus. In the first day of the week, we hear how the disciples went to the tomb to complete what they could not do on Passover and that was to complete the burial ritual of Jesus. We are told that when they arrived, they found the tomb empty.

Being before the fire, was really a sign for me of being at the tomb and experiencing the resurrection, because the fire there was bigger flame than we have. It lighted up the night, dispelling the darkness and thus a tremendous symbol of us beginning our celebration tonight. We are now at a point at our Mass where we are in the light, are strengthening our belief in the resurrection of Jesus – That resurrection of course is something we will see the fruit of in the light of these people who will be brought to their baptism, they overall will be able to see the better man of Christ rising from the dead and dispelling the darkness. The little babies will come to know what darkness is in their lives. It's a journey that the Lord gives each of us – To journey in our lives and to discover what real darkness is like.

The Gospel today spoke about how Peter and the apostle had witnessed the death of Jesus, some of them took the body and put it in the tomb, to believe that the same Jesus was alive again was impossible to accept and believe. That it was Jesus Himself that would remind His disciples of the things that He had already told them when they were in Galilee before they even got to Jerusalem before His death – That He the Saviour would have to die in Jerusalem in this terrible way.

It was a tradition that existed in a sense before the apostles themselves came to believe it, they were the ones who were commissioned by Jesus to be the first of the preachers of this faith, the first to give catechesis to the Church. But who were ones who first saw and hopefully to a little extent actually believed.



A little later, in the Gospel of Luke we hear about the disciples who were on the way to Emmaus, they had experienced the presence of Jesus in their midst and reminding of what He had already said.

There have been so many instances in Scripture and in today's readings of God intervening again and again because of His love for humanity.

Beginning in that story in Genesis, there is that image of God who is working, yes, but there is the work of God who is fighting the elements. In the first thing that He does, he is victorious over darkness, he introduces light Himself, God wrestles with the scene and brings the waters together. Again a sign of His power – the water is a symbol of his destruction. He separates the night from the day, and this foreshadows Christ's own victory over darkness, Christ's resurrection from the tomb and being the light of the world to each of us. He is that light which dispels the darkness in each one of our lives.

The problem for us is that the little that we understand about our faith, we think is the complete story. We forget that the faith is something that we gradually understand more deeply that we are more able to obey, that we are more able to be faithful to. We never have a complete faith.

Let us pray that Christ will shed light upon the darkness, that we would really come to understand not just ourselves but the deep love of God, the One whom we can trust, who can bring new life to us and create in us a new person. As we prepare to witness the baptisms today we are reminded of the baptism which we ourselves have received and the promises that was given to us that Christ will be us in every step of the way, even those steps we take in dark times, He is there with us and He offers the way in those times of darkness.

He offers us the opportunity of a lifetime of being made new again, of deepening this faith which we have because of the experience of His love.

It is in faith that we celebrate Easter Vigil. We pray that in this time of renewal, renewal of faith comes to us, renewal of our hope – That we can believe and trust in that companion who walks with us who is Jesus Christ, who is the light that shows us the way.

**Transcribed*