



Day of the Unborn Child

Homily

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

St Mary's Cathedral
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The words that end the Gospel reading we have listened to just now are intriguing: Each went to his own house.

The spiritual journey that we take through Lent is a retracing of steps that we have taken before. The liturgy provides us with beautiful excerpts from the Word of God that encourage us as we make a pilgrimage again to Easter.

We are encouraged through Lent when we recall the message that God never gives up on his people, no matter our failure to measure up to the high principles of our faith. God patiently repeats the call to us to turn back to his way of love, mercy and justice. Alongside these messages of reassurance, the gathering of the dark clouds of resistance to God's loving plan is woven. And this will get more pronounced as we come near to Good Friday.

St John's experience of Christ, though, encourages us. Even in the face of continuing opposition and outright rebellion against the plan of God to redeem humanity, God does not give up. Jesus remains faithful to the Father and does not lose sight of his purpose, and cooperates in the plan, maintaining control so that nothing happens without him permitting the course of events to unfold. The plan of the Pharisees to get rid of Jesus would involve plots to discredit him, to claim him to be an imposter and to deny him justice. One of them, though, had the courage to stand up for Jesus. Nicodemus reminded his peers that Jesus should have his day in court so that he could have the chance to present his case. But Nicodemus is mocked and fails to turn them from their dark plans to destroy Christ. And we are told, each goes to his own house: Nicodemus goes to the house of truth; his opponents to houses of darkness and blindness.

We really need to listen deeply to this Good News from John as we walk steadily towards Easter. It will be at Easter that we will be offered the chance to say again, "I believe". I believe in the immense and unchanging love of God for humanity, proved by the sacrifice on the cross. I believe in the resurrection of Jesus, our Saviour, and the possibility of renewed life for us. I believe in the gift and power of the Holy Spirit poured out upon us so that we can work as Christians in the world to overcome the darkness and ignorance.



The Word of God has given us ‘a shot in the arm’ this morning as we celebrate the Day of the Unborn. The many people who work to promote and safeguard the life of the unborn need this Word of encouragement. The Holy Spirit is poured out on them and God’s presence among them will never cease.

Ours is the house formed by the Gospel of Light, Truth and Life.

May I say how grateful I am for your commitment to caring and supporting so many women and men at Pregnancy Assistance and the other agencies. The impact of losing a child remains with a parent for life. Practical support on so many levels is necessary. The work of supporting a woman during pregnancy and after the birth of the child can be demanding.

There are so many factors at play in the lives of those who come to us seeking help. One of the newsletters from Pregnancy Assistance last year named them: Unexpected pregnancy; abortion concerns; financial hardship; foetal anomaly; domestic violence; homelessness; isolation and loneliness; relationship breakdown; drug addiction; mental health issues; migration and grief and loss.

None of these situations is easily or quickly resolved. Patient accompaniment and compassion are essential, as is being there regardless of decisions that have been made. Being convinced of the presence of God in each encounter is important to sustain us. Listening to the Spirit and drawing on the grace provided through the Spirit brings humility and a willingness within us “to go the extra mile”.

I am grateful for your commitment to this ministry of love and care. Let us pray for one another that our faith will continue to grow and we may stand by those who seek us out for support. May our House of Light, Truth and Life, Elizabeth’s House, the Centre for Pregnancy Assistance, offer welcome, care and love.