



Day of the Unborn Child

Homily

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

**St Mary's Cathedral, Perth
Saturday 9 March, 2024**

Our gathering this morning is one of those very special occasions for our Archdiocese. The celebration of the Mass for the Unborn Child is a bitter-sweet moment each year as the families and parents recall the sad time in their lives when a baby was lost before they had the chance to be born. However, there is a sense of hopefulness as the Mass provides healing at so many levels for the women and men who have been impacted by the loss.

The Gospel that we have received during the celebration of this Mass came from Luke. The Gospel of Luke has become known as the Gospel of Mercy. It portrays so beautifully how the mercy of God transforms those who hear its words, especially in the stories of Jesus' life and the parables that he used to help people come to know his Father.

The portion of the Gospel reading today was the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. We are told that one went home at rights with God, the other did not. The Pharisee did many good things. He fasted twice a week and gave a tenth of his income to the Temple. Many people would have noticed his faithfulness to the demands of the Law and would have thought well of him. But he was not the one to go home at rights with God.

Why? He was flawed because he looked down on others. His attitude expressed in his prayer was judgemental and elitist. Whereas the attitude of the Tax Collector was true humility. He knew himself for who he was, a sinner who waits for forgiveness. He had come to know that it is only the Father who can make him right, who would make reconciliation happen by moving towards him with mercy. We are the Tax Collector when we open our hearts to the mercy of God in the belief that we receive everything from the Father.

We are all here today carrying our hurts, sadness, regrets and even guilt. But we are all here today because of gifts of God that have carried us through and beyond the losses we have



suffered. Undoubtedly, there may be more healing to be done, a more profound changing of heart, a deepening of our belief in the mercy of God and generosity of God.

Just after the Prayer of the Faithful, you will be invited to come forward and place a flower before the sanctuary. It will represent the child that was lost. If you have other children with you, please encourage them to come with you carrying a flower as well. The death of their little brother or sister may have impacted them too.

Some families have found that choosing a name for that child can be very helpful. It can establish an abiding connection with the unborn children and their parents and siblings, as they have an identity, personhood, and there is a continuing relationship with the rest of their family.

We pray today for these precious children. As well, we pray for the healing of the wounded heart that causes sadness and regret within us.