



**Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year B)  
Fiftieth Anniversaries of Polish Catholic Centre and the Polish Franciscan Friars in Perth**

**Homily**

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

**Queen of Martyrs Church, Maylands  
Sunday 28 April, 2024**

My chance to visit Poland was for World Youth Day in 2016. I accompanied about forty young people from the Archdiocese as we made the pilgrimage to Warsaw and then on to Krakow for the gathering of young Catholics from around the world with the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

There were so many memorable moments along the way that were made possible due to the generosity of the people of Poland. But the one that stands out for me happened in Warsaw. Families had offered their homes to accommodate the young pilgrims. We were astonished at the generosity shown by many of those hosting families.

As you know, the apartments and flats that were built after the Second World War are depressing and uninspiring blocks. They are basic and not spacious, and certainly not beautiful. Yet the families living in them could not have done more to make the pilgrims feel at home, even to the extent of the hosting parents giving up their own bedrooms to the young ones so that they would feel welcome, at home and comfortable.

This was a very generous and loving thing to do, and it had a great impact on our pilgrims. Poland was at its prettiest that summer because of a wetter than usual spring: the countryside was green and lush. But the beauty of the hospitality of those Polish families was beyond comparison.

I was reminded of this as I reflected on the First Letter of St John for our Mass today. He wrote about the relationship we can have with God our Father. The relationship will be life-giving if it is based on love: knowing that God loves us no matter what, and, on our part, learning what love itself means. Love is more than words and feelings; it is what we do.

We mark with this anniversary Mass the fifty years of service of this Polish Catholic Centre and also the fifty years of the ministry of the Franciscans from Poland in the Archdiocese. This church, I am sure, has been a special place of welcome and refuge for your families where they have been invited to draw closer to God who loves them, as they established themselves in a new land.



We know that we are the sons and daughters of God from the time we were baptised, and we have a home in the church. Even so, we may have come into this house of God unsure of ourselves. Sometimes we might not have been sure that we were doing all that pleases our Father. We would have asked ourselves, what were His expectations of us?

It's like what can happen in families. Children can wonder if they are or, are even able, to live up to the expectations of their parents. It is likely that most of us have asked ourselves that question.

With God, we have a different experience. God knows us, knows everything about us, our strengths and weaknesses. Yet God continues to love and welcome us. It is on that basis that we can come into His presence without fear. It is with God that we can grow steadily. It is like the branch that is attached to the vine: our connection to God and His Son, Jesus, is the source of our growth in a strong faith and generous love. We need to remember this. God does not give up on us. All He looks for from us is that we stay connected with Him: trusting in His immense love for each of us and his desire that we discover true happiness with Him.

Our Father makes His expectation clear to us: that we believe in Jesus Christ, his Son and that we love one another, as St John writes.

It is in this community that gathers at the Polish Centre that you hear who Jesus Christ is and the way He proposes to happiness in life, and the call to grow in your capacity to love one another.

Let us give thanks for the Centre's existence and the ministry of the Franciscan Friars. Let us pray in thanks for those who have left us this Centre because of their dedicated support and work over these fifty years.

May we today be committed to the mission of this Centre to all who come here and those who receive the effects of its outreach in ministry and service.