



**Eighth Sunday Ordinary Time (Year C)
Opening of Cottesloe Parish Hall**

Homily

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

**St Mary Star of the Sea Church, Cottesloe
Sunday 2 March, 2025**

We have at some time or other been asked, “Who was your best teacher at school?” I answer, “Peter Mitchell.” He taught me in Years Six and Seven. He was engaging and related so easily to us. He liked encouraging us to get to know Jesus and to take on the Gospel way of life.

In his time as an educator, he developed, a way to live with Spirit of Jesus, known as “Making Jesus Real”, which is increasingly being taken up in schools and colleges as a companion to the Religious Education curriculum. This way to living helps staff and students learn how to practically live what Jesus taught and witnessed.

Peter came to mind when I read the first reading of the Mass: Do not praise a man before he has spoken, since this is the test of a man. This was echoed in the Gospel: For a man’s words flow out of what fills his heart”.

The Gospel follows on from the great Sermon Jesus gave to the disciples, and it is on the relationship between Jesus and the disciples, including us today. The relationship is like that of a good teacher and those who listen. Jesus is the teacher, and we are the disciples. The best teacher knows the content and can pass it on so we can understand.

It is always important to remember that one gift of living our lives is that we learn more and more, and we realise that learning never ends. As long as we are open, have open hearts, we will learn, so there is the need for conversion.

Pope Francis, for whom we are praying as he battles illness, was able to send us a letter for the commencement of Lent. This Lent will be lived in a Jubilee Year: the Jubilee Year of Hope which he called and began just after Christmas. The letter contains the call to conversion for everyone as we begin the great pilgrimage to Easter. We begin this coming week on Wednesday, when we receive the “penitential ashes”. We begin that pilgrimage together which will bring us to the Easter Victory of Christ. The second reading today is the source of the words that we will sing at Easter: Death is swallowed up in victory.....death where is your sting, where is your victory?



The death and resurrection of Christ overcomes all the forms that death takes in our lives.

Pope Francis has proposed that this Lent we take a journey together in hope. It will be reminiscent of the journey of the Hebrews from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. The Holy Father sees that we always journey together, and we can be pilgrims of hope to one another. He asks us to practise the examination of conscience, so in the context of us journeying to Easter, he asks us to begin reflecting on the question, "Are we really on a journey or are we standing still; advancing or not in our faith and living of the Gospel?"

He asks us to examine each day with the question, "Are we walking with others and not as lone travellers; side by side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy, hypocrisy, or leaving others behind and excluding them?"

Thirdly, he suggests that we consider daily the reason for our hope that we wish to share with others. He reminded us that we have been given a promise, and it has been definitively fulfilled in the mission of Christ. It is the hope that St Paul announced to the early community in Rome! "Hope does not disappoint." Why? Because of the unconditional love of God for us. So we can trust God who continues to be with us in every experience in life, the challenging and the joyous ones. The call of Lent is to renewed hope, trust in God and his great promise of life eternal.

So to complete the daily examination of our hearts, Pope Francis asks, "Am I convinced that the Lord forgives my sins? Do I act as if I can save myself? Do I long for salvation and call on God's help for it? Do I experience the hope that enables me to interpret the events of history (my addition: world and personal); that inspires me to commit to justice and fraternity, to care for our Common Home, where no one feels excluded

Let us take this journey of Lent together.

Finally, congratulations to everyone who has taken part in the renovation of the Parish Hall. It is now a very beautiful and functional asset of the parish, I would say for this region of parishes. No other parish in this region has a facility to equal this one, and I am certain that it will make Cottesloe parish a very desirable venue of workshops and faith formation sessions, accessible to the parishes.

The visitation has been a joy. A very positive spirit is evident and is expressed in the ways the priests have been embraced and supported, and in the large number of people who give their time to the various ministries and mission of the parish.

I pray for the pastoral planning that will give vision and direction for the communities of Cottesloe and Mosman Park.