

Homily Good Friday

Welcome and warmest greetings to our Celebration of the Passion of the Lord this Good Friday at St Patrick's Church, Mary Queen of the Family Parish. I would particularly like to extend a warm welcome to those of you who may be from other faiths and traditions attending St Patricks for the first time. Good Friday that most solemn of days when the Church celebrates the death of Jesus the Christ. The death of the long awaited Jewish, Messiah. Celebrating death in a culture that celebrates life may sound odd but we are celebrating the fact that Jesus died for each and every one of us. A fact that's quite profound.

In the waters of our Christian Baptism we are called to die of our old self and to be reborn a new, we are called to die with Jesus in order to be reborn in His Resurrection. We are called to a fundamental change of heart, what the Greeks call "Metanoia". If you Google "Metanoia" you will find it's defined as "a transformative change of heart; especially: a spiritual conversion." In fact we are called to a continuous change of heart. Why continuous: Because we humans are slow learners. If you doubt this think of

this fact for a moment; you belong to a species that during the last century killed 100 million in war, a century that began with a war to end all wars. Look no further than the horrors experienced by members of our own Church community in conflict or the horror of the current conflict in Syria, to see that our race has not learned much.

Jesus' death on the Cross as horrific as it was points to a new beginning in His resurrection on Easter Sunday. Jesus' death as a common criminal shows us that we are better than what we are; we are destined for higher things. Jesus' death and resurrection is a fact, it's not a theory to be proved by some experiment; it's not an alternative fact; it's a fact. If this is true, why isn't everything rosy? The answer is simple if we accept the message of Good Friday that life follows death, it will force us to a transformative change of heart to Metanoia and we hate change with a passion. I hate change; I've eaten the same breakfast cereal every morning for as long as the cereal has been on the market. I drove a Holden for years I now drive a Mazda and think it's without doubt the best car I've owned. If you think that change was simple ask Kaye my wife, I agonised over it.

We partially hate change we don't understand or don't want to understand. I had a very dear friend who I would describe as a humanist. He basically believed in value of human beings, individually and collectively, and thought it was up to us to improve our lives through work, reason and integrity. He rejected the idea of "Heaven" on the grounds that nobody had ever come back to tell us about it. He was unsure about God. His world view was black and white, good and evil; it was simply up to us to make sure the good guys won. A vast majority of my friends and people I know think like this. What's the problem with this thinking? Well you and I become the ultimate arbitrators of good and bad. In fact if you disagree with me then I become the sole arbitrator of good and bad. I become the conscience of society and don't I feel good about it. If you don't eat my breakfast cereal and drive a Mazda well your just plain stupid and plainly can't be trusted. Sound familiar?

If I was to ask you what was Jesus' message you would hopefully answer love God and love one another. If Jesus died for each and every one of us irrespective of what car we drive, cereal we eat, race, skin, sex then we all have individual worth in God's eyes. I don't

know about you but that's one of the most challenging concepts I know. There is a beautiful line in the closing prayer for Christian Meditation that sums up what Good Friday calls us to: "To serve all who come and receive them as Christ himself". I must serve each and every one of you as if you were the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one of God and serve you in the same manner as the Christ would. Pretty powerful when you consider Jesus died for you. We are clearly called by Good Friday to continuous change of heart, a change of heart, which calls us to die to our old ways. Our ego, that little voice that says I know best. A change of heart that will affect all my relationships, my family, my workplace, my Church even how I behave in traffic or at the shops. I will come to recognise the other person as a person Jesus died for. I find this change of heart very difficult but by prayerful reflection on my actions on my mistakes by sitting down in a quiet space with my God and asking how I could have done better. Change will come, it will come slowly remember we are slow learners and we hate change but change we will. It will be difficult but who says Good Friday was easy. But gradually our black and white world will give way to something new and unexpected. Maybe we

will be able serve all who come and receive them as Christ himself.