



DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY
CLOSING MASS – 15TH FEBRUARY 2025
LUMEN CHRISTI, CHURCHILL
HOMILY

My brain freezes over when the stock market report comes on the tv or radio: The ASX, NASDAQ, DOW, DAX (I thought we wore these) and the currencies. I get the impression I am missing out on something. I gather however as indices move so does the level of happiness across the globe! There seems to be a lot of movement at the moment; depending on the day either some very “happy” or some very “worried”.

Jesus speaks of another happiness; He is not speaking in terms of this world or economics; Jesus speaks of the value of kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the encounter of love which seems to turn everything on its head – the ASX, NASDAQ, DOW don’t mean anything in this “happy” place. The “happiness” of which Jesus speaks flows from the relationship he has with the Father, and that we share as his sisters and brothers through the Holy Spirit. It is only in this perspective that the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, the persecuted can be “happy” as they are fed, have their tears wiped, and are not left alone – they are embraced by love. For to such as these does the kingdom of God belong. For in what appears to be poverty in the eyes of the world, can be the place of an inner joy



and peace which cannot be taken away. We see this in the lives of the saints of the Church and we see this every day in the lives of our sisters and brothers.

And so it is that Jesus meets those who have come from all parts of Judaea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon. These people are the forgotten the “*anawim*” and they come to Jesus, and he meets them and speaks to them. He sees them on a “level” piece of ground, for with him and in him there is no distance, only love, compassion and mercy.

He speaks to us this night as we prepare to return to our homes and communities of faith. He speaks to our hearts and wishes to reassure us that we are not alone. He will fill the desert places of our poverty and we will flourish with the grace he gives. He can transform what little we have to give and help us to feed the abundant crowds who come to his Church.

In the words of the Australian poet James McAuley,

*Incarnate Word,
in whom all nature lives,
cast flame upon the earth:
raise up contemplatives
among us, men who walk within the fire
of ceaseless prayer,
impetuous desire.
Set pools of silence in this thirsty land.*

James McAuley (1917-1976), Australian poet



Tonight's beautiful Gospel from Luke reminds us that the task before us is not walked alone. The mission priorities we have set are not some long list of Key Performance Indicators but rather expressions of our hopes and dreams as we dare to live this life in Jesus: Nourished by the Word and fed with His Body and Blood, all are welcome and equal at this banquet of riches! As St Paul says to people of Corinth, "Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep" (I Cor 16:20); this is the Good News!

So, my friends let us take up the mission ahead with renewed faith. Let us be like "trees" by the waterside, who thrust our roots into the stream of love which has been poured out for us in the outstretched arms of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. In him we have all the wealth which enables us to be living witnesses of love to others. Joyful messengers of hope. Communities of welcome and hospitality. People who reach beyond ourselves in order to bring the good news to those who so desperately yearn.

I am convinced that if we think God is silent in our lives and Diocese, then we are not listening to the right voices. That if we think God is not active in our lives or our Diocese, then we are not looking in the right places.

Thank you to each of you for your faith, your time, your commitment and your generosity in being part of this Assembly process. Thank you for being prepared to share your faith, to express your honest opinions. Thank you for listening to one another and being prepared to be surprised by the wisdom of one another. Thank you for your witness, courage, example and holiness.

We have stood on holy ground; it is now time to put our shoes back on and go forth as pilgrims of hope for others!

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us!