

SERMON FOR SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

ST DAVID'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

5 MAY 2024

The contents of my letter to the parish this week should be pleasing. It informs you about very recent developments at St David's and, well, unfortunately I ran out of room to tell you more. Next week there will be more good news to share with you. So don't miss the next instalment sent to you by email. Sharing good news is what a Christian community does and it's okay to get excited. In fact I want you to get excited, it's good for your health and mine.

An important major part of refreshing the parish is that our joint undertaking is done based on integrity, honesty and truthfulness. How else can we establish ourselves on the firm foundation and rock of our lives - Jesus Christ? We can't. The words honesty and truthfulness do not have the same meaning as I'll explain shortly. But as I said last Sunday, *"if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?"* 1 Cor 13.8.

The first of two trumpet calls was to alert us to the necessity of refreshing the parish's mission. I then asked you if you know what the parish mission is. Well, for me, the parish mission as multi-faceted as it is, is about revealing the love God has for all people through the words and deeds of our mission. **As followers of Jesus, we reflect in what we do and say the love God has for all people.** The wider community is very good at noticing what we say and do, and is very quick to recognise when we don't live up to both. That's why it's so important to know what our mission is. Guessing what it is won't do. Yes, we still have a lot to learn about how to do the doing, but I think we know what to say to the world. Jesus is the life of the world is what we can say. Our mission is about showing through our words and deeds that truth.

I said before that the parish's multi-faceted mission must be refreshed. How we decide to refresh it must be based on the qualities of integrity, honesty and truthfulness. It's no good fudging it - making out. Earlier I said that honesty and truthfulness do not have the same meaning. I can honestly and quite sincerely tell an untruth. For instance 'The pews

you are sitting on are of American Oak' (I've got no idea what the timber is). But what I am to tell you now is said honestly and truthfully. I have knowledge to support what I am now going to say to you. This is the clear call from the second trumpet.

At the last parish council meeting our treasurer revealed that the parish's monthly income is \$11,400 and its monthly expenditure is \$17,500. Each month we are in arrears by the tune of \$6,000 and it is a recurring amount. Our expenditure is made up of the priest's stipend and allowances, utilities such as electricity, gas, council rates on the rectory, maintenance of our buildings as well as those other costs we are alive to as home owners.

In order to pay the parish's arrears and meet its long term and essential commitments the parish council has set a period of five years to turn things around. Funding is available from several, what I will call dormitory assets to support us for that period and pay our current debts. I assure you that this is a prudent, and absolutely necessary and acceptable decision by the parish council. Frankly there is no other choice at this time. I thank the treasurer for doing his job and making quite clear what our situation is.

This news is a timely stimulant. Over the last ten years the cost of living (inflation) has risen 23.4% according to the statistics issued by the Australian Parliament, and our parish income has not appreciated anywhere near to the same extent. In fact, through natural attrition it has gone backwards.

Obviously we need to respond to this situation. **No one person is the solution.** But all of us together can be the solution. This is not a time to be despondent nor is it a time to point fingers. I would like you to see it as an opportunity to refresh the parish's mission. I do! It is an opportunity for us to show what we can do together.

How will we make a difference and turn things around?

The cost of living has increased over the decade by 23.4%. So now that Joan and I are much more aware, we have asked ourselves has our voluntary contribution to the parish's mission increased near to or by the same amount? We know ours hadn't so we must consider increasing our contribution. Not in a fortnight's time but by next Sunday. Well,

I've made a start as my most recent letter testifies, and Joan and I have agreed to increase our monetary giving. I ask you to see what you can do too.

The person who will be our parish priest will want to see evidence that we can be a viable, positive minded parish that is prepared to show it knows what its mission is and is prepared to support it whatever the challenges are.

We don't want our parish priest to be chasing dollars, rather chasing in evangelistic terms new people for God.

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Fr John

Saturday 4 May 2024