

Homily. 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 1/2 August 2020.

If last weekend was all about 45 of our children, their families and many of us discovering, or perhaps re-discovering the hidden treasure and priceless pearl that is the gift of the Lord to us in the Eucharist with the celebration of their First Holy Communion, then this weekend is about Nicole and her long journey of faith into union with God and with us.

Having had our Easter plans delayed in March by the Covid 19 lockdowns and shutdowns, Nicole is finally able to enter into full communion with us through the celebration and reception of her Baptism, Confirmation and her First Eucharist at this Mass (at the 5.30pm Saturday evening Parish Mass). Her journey over many years, but especially these last 18 months, has led Nicole to commit her life to the One True God within our Catholic community and communion of faith. However, the story doesn't end with these sacraments and their celebration. It never does end because the story of faith is one for life, and living our faith is for all eternity in Christ, by the power and action of the Holy Spirit within us.

Jesus fed the great crowd because He was trusted by the disciples with their supplies of 5 loaves and 2 dried fish. The gift and sacrifice of their all, meagre as it seemed, in His hands and by the power of God's grace became food for the many satisfying their hunger. Nicole's hunger for truth, for community and for the right way forward has led her to our doors. After her months of prayer, sharing and study we will soon honour and ritualise her journey, praying for her ongoing growth and fruitfulness, while committing ourselves to assisting her in living the faith we profess. Nicole serves to remind us of who we are and what we say we believe,

and we serve her reminding her of what she will become, the body of Christ given for the nourishment, growth and life of the world.

The multitude that evening in Galilee went away satisfied, minds full of Jesus words and teaching, hearts warmed by the hope and healing He offered and bellies full of food for free. Only a few would have stopped to ponder what it all really meant. Even the disciples, His closest friends and collaborators, took some time to grasp the revelation Jesus gave through the sign. We are blessed to understand that the bounty of food was full of meaning, a service we offer to one another in Christ, sustaining and growing people in faith, strengthening them for the journey we're all making through this difficult world and into the world to come.

Sacrifice and trust in the Lord is the meeting point of this exchange; our self-gift, meagre as it might be, given into the hands of the Lord who takes and blesses, breaks and shares out our offering, making of it something greater than it was to begin with and more than needed for the many. From God's gifts we give all we have, receiving in exchange the total gift of the generous God. Nicole has come to realise this truth and every Eucharist will remind her of it, just as it does us. In communion with us from now onwards she will, as we do, heed Jesus words and give the people something to eat ourselves. This is nothing less than the gift of ourselves united with Jesus in His death and resurrection for all time.