

Homily. 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. A. 1/2 July 2023.

One of my best friends from School was an indigenous Australian. Last year here I talked to you here about this. Another fact is that my brother, a Police Officer, early in his career spent some years at the Murgon Station while he resided at the Police house at Cherbourg. Some of the things I've learnt about Australian 1st Peoples culture from these and others is that they don't talk much about mine and yours, but about ours. They also tend not to consider thanks necessary either, because when they use something that the extended family and clan have it's theirs to use and why would you need to thank someone for what's already yours? When 1st Nations Australians give gifts from their ownership to other clans and cultures they do expect thanks, and rightly so, for they are giving from their inheritance to those who don't have any claim on or right to it.

This cultural mind-set is very different to our common Western European cultural ways and it does takes some adapting to understand and appreciate. We see this in the Elisha story and in the gospel teaching that Jesus give to his apostles as he prepared them for their mission to new towns, villages and unknown peoples. Elisha was grateful to the woman for her generosity and hospitality, promising her a son from God by the time he next came her way. Jesus taught his apostles to accept and value the help, hospitality and gifts offered to them as they carried on his work.

My experience is that our Parish and community here doesn't lack in either hospitality or generosity. This charisma is something we ought rejoice in, keep strong in practicing and ensure is passed on to those who join us for worship, fellowship and mission. At the same time we can

always do with heightening our awareness of new people who come to be with us, reaching out to know and include them, welcoming their insights and gifts. The 7 priorities that Archbishop Coleridge gave us for the future flowering of our Church, included over the 7 weeks of Easter Time and listed again in this weekend's Newsletter, have their foundation in and are based upon the attitude and practice of generosity and hospitality to all.

We desire to welcome people to come to us and learn how to pray from our rich, deep and broad Catholic tradition. We want to build up and maintain our faith communities in ways that are sustainable, attractive and very welcoming. We seek to include, learn from and integrate into our Parish life persons and cultures from around the global village. To those people who have not been welcomed, who have experienced abuse and neglect, we commit to make restoration and work on forgiveness and healing. We accept that we are people of this one earth and that it, too, has been used and abused, so we seek to protect, defend and respect the environment. To our First Nations Peoples, we extend hospitality and seek a growing understanding of their cultures, wisdom and ways. Lastly, but by no means least, here we have already embarked on a Synodal way of governance, a path that involves us in mutual prayer, respect for our shared wisdom and leadership that is collaborative and flexible. Our coming July 16th Parish Assembly is our next step along this road.

Why, though, is the Archbishop calling for this? Why have I already set us forth on this course? Why do each and every one of us need to come along and participate in our next Parish Assembly Parish, getting even more involved in shaping our future? Well, of course, because of Jesus. We are born again into his self giving death by our Baptism and through it

have been raised to have a share in his new life. As St. Paul says, we now have to think of ourselves as being dead to our old ways of selfishness and me, me, me, becoming more alive every day for God in Christ our Saviour.

It's God's generous welcome of us that both obliges and empowers us to share and live without cost what we have so freely been given. If we get this bit right in our heads, planting it firmly in our hearts, values and deeds, then the rest that needs our attention and action will quite naturally fall into place and make sense. We will then, as the Opening Prayer said, always be seen to stand in the bright light of God's truth, and for better than that in this world we can neither hope nor wish.