

## FR. KEVIN'S HOMILY DATED 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018

Yesterday I was talking to a parishioner who said "if you ever want some free entertainment, go down to the courts". He was mentioning Dandenong Court, but I have heard similar things said about Ringwood and Geelong and other places. You can just take a seat inside of the court and you would not know whether to laugh or to cry. That's probably true. So I picked up the paper this morning and one of the things what is happening now, although we tend to listen to the news more than we read, which is a pity as we missed out on some of those gems, which the sub-editors are supposed to have those headlines that grab your attention with puns and humour and all. And keeping in mind to what the parishioner said to me yesterday about this article in the Herald Sun and it is about a serial burglar and he spelt his name M-I-A-O (Miao). And the headline went something like *Convicted Feline Answers to Miao* and the guy was described as a cat burglar, which in fact, he was. But if you read further into the story, the fella was convicted because his DNA was found on jimmies that he used to break into the house and his DNA was all over it. In his defence, he said "it wasn't mine, it must have happened by magic." I don't think that got him off.

Having read that article, I went a couple of pages further on, it was not quite as amusing. It was a story which talked about a YouTube Kids app of YouTube clips for kids and the mother was watching a clip with her three year old and found it has somehow become infected by some people putting on a mixture of violence and pornography within it being watched by kids three, four and five year olds. Fortunately for her vigilance, they were not subjected to that. But we live in such an ugly world that little kids or pre-schoolers are being subjected to so much. It's not that much further on where the kids will say "hey, have you seen this?" and produce their phone or whatever. But these are pre-schoolers supposedly meant to be watching material that is proper, suitable and entertaining or whatever for little kids and it turned out to be anything but. Reality is, in those circumstances, kids can be so traumatised that it will affect them for the rest of their lives. And as we go further on, and we are faced with carjackings and all sorts of areas of violence and we read further on of the institutions or whether it's the banks, the government or even the church or whatever and it is pretty distressing. That's the world in which we live and we think, "what do we do about it?"

Most of the time we throw our hands up and we'd say "what CAN we do about it?" And there is a little line in what is in the gospel today that is relevant but it was in that second reading of St Paul to the Ephesians, and he said "be very careful about the sort of lives that you lead" – like intelligent and not like senseless people. In other words, that you have been given a brain, use it. This may be a wicked age. Now he's talking about two thousand years ago. I'm sure he was right but it applies to us too. And if there is any visit to the courts or the combing through the newspapers will convince us how true it is.

This may be a wicked age but your lives should redeem it. Now, that's a big ask, isn't it? In other words, YOU can change the world. Now, we read that and then we say "Hang on, ME? How can I change the world?"

We may not be able to change the whole world, but we can change OUR world. We can set ourselves to look at what needs to be done, and live life the very best we can. And know that good will always overcome evil. It is very easy for us to look at the ugliness of our world, kids three and four being subjected to all sorts of terrible images and all the other things that go with it and wonder what that will be, and we can look at any number of scandals or further up the track at people we are trusting who can't be trusted and saying "right, I'm out of here". But, we are here.

People have often asked me “are you an optimist?” and I said “Well, I’m the son of a man who barrack for South Melbourne and followed the horses, so of course I’m an optimist!” Because South Melbourne in the 50s and 60s were a disaster! We can look on the bright side and we can, because we have the gift of God’s presence and we have the gift of God’s grace - and all around us, there are any number of examples of people who took on board the fact that it might be a wicked world but I can do something.

One of the most impressive people I have ever met – amazing lady, is the woman by the name of Moira Kelly. Moira Kelly is a nurse by profession, and in doing some volunteering over in Africa to begin with, she came across children whose conditions were such that they were blind, they were lame or whatever or they had terrible heart problems and so on, required treatment that could never been given to them where they lived. So she began a project called Children First and she has been bringing those children across, some who are terribly deformed and they had been able to live fruitful lives. She will go on to convince medical people here in Australia, that they should donate their services in surgeries, in hospitals and so on, to be able to look after these kids. Sometimes they were fixed up and they were able to go back to their own families. On occasions they have stayed here, and she has actually become a foster mother to some, including, if you might recall, the two little twins who were conjoined at the head and separated them. And that is Moira Kelly and that’s one woman the number of lives she has affected directly and the number of people that her selflessness has inspired is absolutely amazing. And that’s because she must have read those words of St Paul – “This may be a wicked age, but your lives can redeem it.” YOUR LIVES. And that is the message we are getting today, along with the equipment – the end of today’s gospel, Jesus talks about the Eucharist “Anyone who eats this bread, will live forever”.

Lots of people live life and they say “look, I’m 40, I’m 50, I’m 60 or whatever...life has passed and I can’t do anything now. Jesus says, “hey, you can live forever, so get on with it”. It’s such an encouraging message for us – to know that every day, and every moment that we are given, we can make this world a better place. We can make the world, or maybe the person in front of us, the person who is on the phone, the person who is pouring their heart out to us in sadness, we can make their world a better place. And we got the time because we have the gift of the Eucharist, and through the Eucharist, we will live forever. Not in a worldly sense sure, but in the sense this whole dimension of life as we understand it, and as we don’t understand it.

So sure, there are some ways which where we can take a step back and say “world’s gone mad, I’m out of here” but we can’t get out of here. We are here and we are meant to be here. And we are meant in the words of St Paul - in whatever way we can to redeem it, to make it better, to look after this person or that person, to somehow build a better, more caring community and it might be just our street, or our relationship with our next-door neighbour or whoever, or it might be just a cheerful smile to someone in the supermarket, or whatever it might happen to be, we can make the world a better place. Wicked it might be. Scary sometimes – absolutely. Can it be redeemed – too right it can. And our mission is to do our bit. Let’s take courage from the Lord’s words, from St Paul’s words and especially from the gift of the Eucharist to know nothing is beyond us and God’s grace.

In the name of the Father, and the son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.