

## **FR KEVIN DILLON'S HOMILY DATED 16.12.18**

About 3 or 4 days ago my brother mentioned something that he was thinking of getting and I said, "Don't get it I'll get it for you. It will be my Christmas present for you". So I got on the net and ordered it and it turned up within I think 30 hours of being ordered. I thought that was alright, I didn't have to go shopping, I didn't have to park the car, I didn't have to wait in the heat and whatever, all done with my friend PayPal, which makes it very easy indeed to do. And I thought how easy it is to do this and how many of us are doing this, ordering things online and the whole retail trade is suffering enormously. I can remember just a few months ago, going into a very large retail store. It was Monday afternoon about 3 o'clock and I looked around and it was a big expanse and I took a photo of it on the camera because I couldn't believe it. Did a full 360 degree turn in this very busy, well known department store and it wasn't busy, that was the whole point.

Did a whole 360 degree turn and there was not one person to be seen, 3 o'clock Monday afternoon. And, that means no staff and no customers. So where's that all going in terms of retail. Things are changing, people are still buying things, but the less customers, the less staff can be provided; the less staff can be provided, the more people are likely to go online, etc. etc. Ultimately, it will take its course, and it's not a matter of what's good or what's not good, it's just a matter of it will find its own level. But one of the things I was impressed with was, having ordered this maybe about 10 o'clock at night and it turns up less than 30 hours, if I'm doing my mathematics, probably about 36 hours later gets delivered to my door and it's about service. Service is a word, if we went to big stores and there were lots of people there to service and serve us with service and if I asked where can I find this or have you got this in this size or whatever or how do I work this or whatever, we would be overwhelmed.

That's probably the way it used to be not all that long ago but the age of internet purchasing has changed so much. Now so many people are online, in retail people can't afford to be employed. But life is about service and we're often told that and rightly so in terms of how we look after one another. We are called to be people of service, which doesn't mean we are called to be slaves or called to be a doormat that people walk over or whatever, but we are called to support and help one another whether it's in our normal job, within our family, within some area of community engagement that we get into, we are called to serve one another. It's the way we

express the call to love one another. Sometimes though we can lose the plot a little bit and think we need to do something very very spectacular and this little gospel story today of John the Baptist and the people coming up and saying as questions that we used in the introduction to the mass – ‘What must we do?’.

It’s a leading question, it was an open ended question and they probably got a much more comforting answer from John the Baptist than what they perhaps had expected and he said, “Just keep doing what you’re doing and do it well”. There’s an old country song along those lines. Actually when it’s all said and done, there’s an old country song for just about everything like - When you know how to hold them, know how to fold them , when to walk away and when to run. What good advice that is. But this one was - Do what you do, do well boy; Do what you do, do well. And that’s for every one of us and that’s if essentially, I don’t know if John the Baptist was into country music or not. But if he was he would have loved that song, because that’s what he was saying. He even said to the tax collectors, “Exact no more than your rate”. In other words, if that’s your job do it and do it honestly and don’t be greedy and don’t take more for yourself.

The soldiers, he said to them, “Well you’ve got a job which gives you authority, which gives you some sort of physical presence in people’s lives. You can boss them around if you want to, but do it the right way. Don’t extort money from people”, and then the very interesting one, that not everyone would subscribe to “Be content with your pay”. Not everyone would give that a tick, but that’s what he said. It’s the ordinary things that we do. This weekend there’s been an announcement of what they called the Pride of Australia awards. They were introduced about 13 years ago through the Herald Sun and the Murdoch group of newspapers. It’s a good idea of recognising ordinary people for doing good things, sometimes simple things. But think good things that make our community, our society better. Some have been acts of bravery. 2 young girls who were in the news a while back in a surf lifesaving club.

Word went out that someone needed rescuing, and they just went straight in, at a great risk for themselves and effectively saved a couple of people who were on trouble Others have come up with great ideas to service people who are shut in their home, and need a home service. One was a dentist who had worked out some sort of a mobile dental service particularly for people who were elderly and frail and just couldn’t get to the dentist and he said “Well they can’t come to me, I’ll go to them”.

Great idea, apparently in the 13 years it's been going, there have been 20,000 Australians nominated for that Pride of Australia award a year, primarily for being people of service and that's what they've done. It's a great challenge and invitation at the same to all of us to look at what we're doing. I had this conversation a while back with a group of people, senior people, they were all grandparents and they were lamenting the fact that they "didn't go to work" and they said, "Well we really can't see much point in our job".

And I said, "Hang on a minute, you'll are all grandparents, how do you'll fulfil your role?" One said, "Well I drive the kids to and from school and look after them and then their mum and dad pick them up from my place and so on". And I said, "What are you doing? You are raising children, you are very much an integral part of their life". Others were part of a service group in rotary and something like that. Others were just caring for neighbours and one was, even though a grandparent was looking after their own parents, who was clearly a great grandparent and doing an absolutely mighty job in terms of selflessness. That's service, it's not spectacular and it won't even necessarily gain a nomination for the Pride of Australia award but if John the Baptist was here and talking to them he would say 'Good on you, just keep doing what you're doing and doing it well'.

So that's our message whatever you're doing do it well, do it fairly do it justly, do it as a way that you would wish that the task would be done for you and that's all you need to do. That's what life is about. The most fascinating part of the life of Jesus was the fact that of the 33 years that He was with us in this earthly life, he spent over 90% of it just doing the ordinary things, as a kid, teenager, young adult, as a carpenter, that is what he did and he made holy the ordinary life that we all live and He said, "This is what holiness is about, doing what you do well". John the Baptist backed him up 100%.

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