

FR. KEVIN DILLON'S HOMILY DATED 10.02.19

APRA, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. In the wake of the Royal Commission of the banks and financial institutions and APRA itself has come in for a bit of a beating because they have meant to be the auditors of appropriate practice by the banks where you all have your money, where the parish has its money and to which we all rely on for proper governance. Part of the fall-out of the Royal Commission is that APRA wasn't doing its job well is possible. So as well as the commissioning into the banks is the inquiry to fix up APRA. And the person experienced in business banking by the name of Graham Samuel has been appointed to do that. I was quite fascinated to read his comments. Today, he talked about changing of the culture of the banks in the wake of the Royal Commission. And he says "The current executives and board of the nation's banks are not the right people to repair the industry's damaged culture."

On the day of the shocked resignation of the National Australia Bank's Chairman Ken Henry and Chief Executive Andrew Thorburn, Mr. Samuel said banks could change their culture – a key focus of the Royal Commission, but it would be a near impossible task for incumbent management. Banks can change their own culture subject to an acceptance at the top but the culture NEEDS to change, he said. Invariably, it is very difficult for those responsible for the culture and the practices of the past to change their tone in the future. They are fascinating words and they are very accurate. It is often said, what is the definition of insanity? Insanity is the same people doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result and is pretty close to the mark. But the whole banking Royal Commission is of course not being the only blow that most people ever see because you can hardly avoid connection with the banks. For the odd punter here and there, it has been sort of a distressing week to know what needs to be done in the entire industry and that is another long and difficult story.

We've got Lawyer X and the whole police operation and it is going to be a long and expensive inquiry and the list goes on in so many areas of our lives that where we used to find a sense of stability, and solid foundation for our own decision making and our own lives. I've reflected on that a bit on the bulletin this week because it

certainly very much reflects on the church as well just having the Royal Commissions in the churches and other religious institutions. Where does that leave us? It leaves I think so many people very discouraged. So many people said that those institutions, those people, on whom they relied for leadership, for guidance, for role models whatever, to say, “how do find a real direction in life?”

A lot of people are floating around really, like the gospel earlier today talking about the sheep without a shepherd. And that is often how we can feel when all those solid foundations that we used to rely on, and had a right to rely on are subject to the very most, a lack of confidence and sometimes to actual corruption. So how do we manage all that? How do we get through this discouragement? And it can be there not just in the societal part of our lives but it can be there in our personal lives as well. People who used to rely on family members who support, and love and care but they are off doing their own thing. And it is pretty tough doing that.

The little gospel story of today is one which Jesus says “Hang on, I’m still with you. I haven’t forgotten you.” It is a gospel of encouragement. I found two little pieces. They are both very short. And I know often some people say, I didn’t come to church to hear Sylvester Stallone and Denzel Washington but you will, just for two minutes each. Just two little clips that say something to us. The first one is Rocky from the film Rocky Balboa. Rocky was a lot older than he was when he won the world championship in boxing. He has a son, and his son is drifting away from him quickly because he doesn’t really like being Rocky’s son. He’s been glad he has the name to get going, but he wants to distance himself from all of these. This little clip, he talks to his son and he tells him how much he loves him, how much he needs him, how much he admires him, but he also makes a very important point. “As a boxer, it is not how hard you can hit, it is not how hard you are hit, it is how hard you can BE hit and keep going.” Let us have a look at the clip - https://youtu.be/_Z5OookwOoY . Great advice from a father to his child and we are all children of the Father. We all get discouraged, we all get angry. We are not sure if we can make it tomorrow. The words here are not words of the scripture but they might as well be. Same message He gives to Peter, James, John in their boat in the gospel today.

From Sylvester Stallone to Denzel Washington. This is not a movie. This is a talk he gave a couple of year back to a group of university graduates and he gives three,

four pieces of advice but we will just look at one of them because it is the most important one. He is one of the most successful, well-known and probably one of the richest people in the world and he says to the university graduates and to the many endless people who have seen this video – he says, rule number one is “Put God first.” Refer to clip - https://youtu.be/BxY_eJLBflk .

Quite the words. He has been protected, directed and corrected. And so have we all. Jesus puts it in slightly different terms but He says the same thing – “put our nets | for a catch”. Jesus was not a professional fisherman, He was probably as much a fisherman as I am and I can tell you, I am no fisherman – but that was not the point. What they needed was not the technical skills, what they needed was the encouragement. It is what we are here for. We are here to draw strength from the difficult world – whether it is the banks, or whether it is church or whether it is the racing industry, whether it is a place, or whether it is anything – when we get dejected, whether it is our family who let us down and disappoint us or whether it is ourselves who let ourselves down. Jesus says “put our nets for our catch, and have another go”. The words of encouragement, the words of hope, just try to take them on board because we need them.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.