

## **FR. KEVIN DILLON'S HOMILY DATED 07.07.19**

This weekend there will be considerable interest in the progress of Wimbledon for the first time in probably a while, really we've got someone that really is doing extremely well. We've had interest in Australian tennis players for ... other reasons, not necessarily the best reasons over the last few years, but anyway that's another story. But the story of Ash Barty, Ash standing for Ashleigh, has been a fascinating one on so many levels in terms of her, not just her sporting prowess, but her personality, her demeanour, her whole attitude and so on has been something that has been an ornament to herself, her sport self and son on. One interesting element though of the story of Ash Barty is that she was a Wimbledon junior champion at the age of 15 and a couple of years later, she gave it all way and returned to cricket for a couple of years and apparently she's pretty good at cricket too.

But it was the tennis that eventually drew her back but one wonders what was going through her mind, what were people saying to her, her family maybe coaches and people who cared about her and saw her talent when she said, "Sorry, I don't want to do this anymore, I'm going to play cricket" and one can imagine some of the conversations that would have gone on. Her story which is a happy story and then hopefully will continue to be so, is interesting from so many elements, but particularly the fact that at one stage she said 'I'm out of here, I don't want to do this anymore'. Now we know what's happened since, but it may well have been as would have been others, where considerable talent was shown and the person, doesn't have to be sport, could be anything, can walk away and say, 'No I quit, I'm out of here. I don't want to do this anymore', notwithstanding talent, ability, need, any of those and many other reasons why perseverance would seem to be the way to go, to get through the speed humps, and you'll get over it and things will get better.

'No, I quit'. The whole notion of quitting is something that we don't spend enough time may be thinking that sometimes, not always, not sometimes, it can be ok. Sometimes, it's the right thing to do. Sometimes it might be, as for Ash Barty, just taking a breather and coming back, having a rest. Other times it's, 'Well, can't do any more'. Two weeks in a row in reading the gospel, we've had a very similar message of the apostles who have gone out, knocking on the doors and proclaiming the kingdom of God is at hand, and it hasn't always been a welcome message. They've run into opposition, they've run on to people who in the famous words of Sam Newman couldn't be less interested and it's been pretty discouraging for them. We

have today as we did last week, another example of that, where Jesus says to them, 'Look sometimes this message is going to be unwelcome.

Whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome', he doesn't say 'just keep at it and at it and at it', what does he say? He says 'Go out into the streets, wipe off the very dust from your feet and say to them, we're wiping out dust that clings to our feet and we leave it with you. See you later, we're outta here' and go off to the next place. That's not exactly what we normally associate with the whole sense of Christian perseverance and keep on keeping on and that sort of thing. It's not necessarily the sort of message we normally expect to hear when you come to church, because the message of perseverance and encouragement can be a very strong one and indeed that's a good thing to do, but not always. Sometimes we have to say I can't do this anymore. Sometimes we say, this is useless, this is energy being expended, and expended in an area and nothing is going to come of it. On a practical level, wonder what that might be.

Well, might be an academic course of some description that's being engaged upon, where it's also uninteresting, or unproductive or the results are just, not good at that, so may be need to give it away and try to do something else where talent is better used. Sometimes it might be a business enterprise, set up, always wanted to do this, and if only if we go into this, this will make a fortune. I had a great idea of setting up a business, I've never quite put it together, it was to get placemats that kept your meal warm. If anyone is interested in pursuing that I'll tell you about it later. Sure there's a fortune out there. So you know, you put your plate on the mat, and it's got heat coming into the plate so your meal doesn't get cold. That is a fantastic idea, I just haven't quite gotten around to it. I'm sure if I got into business tried to produce it, it would get nowhere. But people get ideas and they work their business plan and so on, and it just goes downhill all the time.

Addictions, not necessarily our own, that's a matter of perseverance, for trying to persuade, draw someone else out of addictive behaviour, that can be so utterly soul destroying, because, you just keep at it and at it and at it, and it can destroy every other relationship. And talking of relationships, that's probably the most difficult area of all, where within the context of family specially with all sorts of different friendships, where something has happened, we've tried to rebuild the bridge, time and time again, tried to establish the communications, tried the cards and the gifts and the notes and the favours and whatever, and it all falls on totally deaf years.

But we've got to persevere, so we send another card next Christmas and so on. Eventually, maybe Jesus says to us, 'Look you've done everything you can, you can't do anymore, shake the dust off your feet and get on with it to the next place, the next person.'

All that energy, that emotional input you're putting into that relationship, may be it could be expended far better with somebody else and be far more productive and may be you'll end up just destroying yourself if you just keep on going so hard that you can't achieve anything. Shake the dust off your feet'. It's a great little line that's there in the gospel and it's not meant to be something that says, you have permission to quit at the first hurdle or difficulty, but it does say, there is a time when may be if you've done your best and you can't do anymore, and you can't build another bridge and you've had it, Jesus says, 'That's okay, I understand'. My very apostles faced the same problem and I said to them, just get on and get on to the next town and start again. Now the tricky bit of course is how do you tell the difference. How do you tell when to quit, when to give it away and when to keep going.

Well, if there was, now that would be a good business, if I wrote a book on that, or you wrote a book on that, and it really worked, that would be fantastic. But we are people of prayer, we are people of faith and there are areas of wisdom within the context of what we've been given within the scriptures, may be within our family upbringing, may be within our common sense and intelligence which can guide us through, But especially within the context of asking for, in prayer for the guidance that we need. Asking questions like, and asking for a genuine answer, why am I doing this and prayerfully asking for the answer to that. Asking a question like, if I give this away, and don't keep doing what seems like hitting my head against a brick wall, who is going to be harmed? And can that still be avoided or minimised, asking questions like, what will happen if I quit, who else will be affected and asking questions like, can I manage this and still get on with it and saying 'Lord, you know everything, you know I'm really having a go at this, I'm giving it the RHG, the Red Hot Go, I've been doing that for weeks or months or even years and nothing is happening.

Is this where I just walk away and shake the dust from my feet? Now we're not going to get a vision from heaven, we're not going to get a bolt of lightning, spelling out YES or NO to those questions, but at least we know that we've done our best, we've

asked the right questions, we've searched our soul, we've put it before the Lord, and we know that for all the worth of perseverance, which can be fantastic and which can produce great breakthroughs and which can get us over the line, sometimes it's better to say I don't want to play tennis, I want to play cricket and get on with that and maybe down the line things change. It's okay to change. It's okay sometimes to stop, seeking the Lord's guidance about which is which, know there's no perfect answer to it. It's there in the gospel, two weeks in a row we're got it, got to be there for a reason, last week, this week. Maybe as we pray today, he knows areas which are tough, which require an enormous amount of energy and input on our behalf and where it seems like we're really getting nowhere.

This is not a matter of saying well there's a green light, right I'll stop. No we put it before the Lord and maybe we ask a few people who we respect and say, look what do you think? You know the situation, people whose opinion is valuable, should I keep going, should I turn my energy into another area, maybe they'll say, keep on, maybe they'll say, with love for us and appreciation of the situation, maybe they'll say, shake the dust from your feet. Either way, if we've truly tried to seek the Lord's input and guidance and the guidance of good people who are the instruments of God's grace, either way whether we keep on or shake the dust, to try and be in the best sense of the word, comfortable, about the decision that we make and who knows, down the track things can change and we might even start playing tennis again.

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