

Fr Kevin Dillon - HOMILY DATED 8.09.2019

A little over 2 years ago when I knew that I was coming to St Simons I had a look at the satellite view on Google maps of what the whole place looked like from a plane/ helicopter/ drone or whatever they do these things with. I had a look at the house that was for me to live in. It was very big, much bigger than I needed. But one thing that was very good was the garage, and a big carport – big enough for 4 cars in the garage and 4 cars in the carport – huge! I thought to myself when leaving Geelong – good, I can take everything. But then I thought, ‘Don’t you dare!’. When you move that is a God given opportunity to get rid of stuff, which I did to a large degree – or to some degree, anyway.

When I moved in there was not a great deal of things I had to put in there, but I had a few tubs of this that and the other. All sorts of bits and pieces I thought might come in handy one day. Well they haven’t come in handy because I haven’t the foggiest idea where they are now. Because since we started to work on the parish centre, we have accumulated all sorts of things which we are storing, and which will ultimately go into the parish centre – furnishings and so on.

What’s interesting is I don’t think I’ve even looked at any of those bits and pieces I’ve had in boxes in the 2 years or so since I’ve been here, and I don’t think I’ll look at them again. So, when all the other stuff is moved out, I will have this decision to make whether to turf everything else out and hopefully I will. The benefit of moving house is that we have an opportunity to look at those things that we have that ‘might come in handy’ – as we said in the last move we made, and the one before that and the one before that, and we haven’t used them at all.

The whole element of possessions is something that is extremely challenging, more for some than others. There are some people who keep things for the rainy day, and some who work on the basis of ‘when in doubt, throw it out’. It’s interesting when people like that live in the same house together – it can be interesting what follows!

There is an important aspect to this, and it is the notion of what is temporary in our lives. Some friendships are temporary, some relationships – maybe many – are temporary. If you’re not sure of that have a look through your phone and see who you haven’t talked to or been in contact with since who knows when. People come and go out of our lives, and that’s the way we manage, the way we’re meant to manage. It’s a matter of how much importance we put on individuals and situations. How much do we think ahead in terms of what is of enduring value and importance in our life and what is simply temporary?

I've often wondered in dealing with people who are really crushed and defeated as to how to try to get them to look at the 'big picture' and put what we're dealing with in that context.

In the Gospel that we have just heard, Jesus talks around these issues. If we can get on board with the real meaning of what he's saying, it can be of great consolation to us. That word 'temporary' comes into it, and that word 'vision' comes into it as well. The whole story of the fellow putting up the building and has he got enough money to complete the building. Maybe on a more serious note, the king going off to war – he has 10 000 troupes, but what about his rival on the other side who has 20 000. The need, Jesus says, to assess the whole situation and see the issues that confront us in the whole context of what it's all about.

Now you may not be going off to war, and it might not be 20 000 against 10 000, it might just be one against one. Most of the wars we deal with are on that basis. But to stop and say – how much does this matter? We've got some sort of an issue we've got to sort out, he / she has done this or that and I'm not happy ... But does it really matter, how big a deal is it really? Jesus says to put this into the bigger picture of life and recognise how many things are fleeting, temporary and can be managed better later as life moves on.

Sure, there are some bigger things in our lives that need to be take on and fought fervently, but there are also many things that don't matter all that much. Jesus says, think ahead, think of what you're doing, what you're undertaking. Think about how much this matters, how much it's worth. Think about whether I have the resources within me to pursue this, or whether it would be better to let it go.

Jesus talks about 'shaking the dust off your feet.' This is the same sort of theme. We go into a shop and we think, 'that's nice,' and all we must do is produce a little piece of plastic and we can take it home with us. We walk out with it.

But at the end of the month we get that piece of paper in the mail and we must pay for it. We need to think of that before we produce the piece of plastic. It's the same theme in a modern setting. We need to think ahead and consider whether I can afford it? Sometimes it means something in monetary terms, sometimes in terms of my own equilibrium in life, sometimes it's about relationships.

Sure, there is someone who has annoyed me, and I'd like to chew them up and I'm all set to send them a letter or ring them up ... but what happens when payday comes around, when the bill comes in? Not necessarily the financial bill, but the emotional bill. How much we care for each

other? Jesus says – think of all that before you get going. Remember that adage, *never start a fight that you're not going to win*. There is enormous wisdom in that. These are all variations on the same theme and to recognise how much in life is temporary.

So often I've come across people who've talked about relationships they've had that have been severed, and they don't remember why. So, whatever the issue was it's destroyed a friendship/relationship. It may have been valid, it might have been worth it, or it may have been that we weren't travelling along all that well at the time and we took it on too seriously said or wrote a few things we shouldn't have and it all just went all over the place and years later, it has never been repaired. Jesus says *think of these things*.

After talking about the 10 000 or 20 000 men, Jesus then says 'none of you can be my disciple unless you give up all of your possessions. On the surface it doesn't seem to follow. On the one hand he's talking about going to war and putting up a building, but then he says you can't be my disciple unless you give up all your possessions. It doesn't seem to follow, but it does. Thinking ahead. Seeing the whole picture and looking especially at possessions we all have that we seek after, or never use, hang on to. It's an indication of us looking at the smaller picture, of the things that don't matter.

Jesus says if you can extricate yourself from that you will start having life in its proper perspective. Everything is temporary, things come, and things go. In the long run it's our relationship with the Lord that counts for most, and everything that we do, everything that we have. The relationships we cherish and the ones that we set aside are all seen in the context of how we stand with God himself.