

'ASCENSION and MOTHERS DAY' - MAY 8 2016

WELCOME to our mothers today.

WELCOME to those who have become mothers recently.

WELCOME to our visiting refugee families today,

WELCOME to the Iraqi mothers celebrating their first Mothers' Day in Australia.

During Year 3 Mass on Friday, the children stood and turned towards the mothers and grandmothers and those who have a mothering role in their lives.

With big smiles the children joined with me to PRAY for them and THANK GOD for them.

Earlier in the Mass, some children had acted out the Gospel as I read it.

Simple actions for each part of the Last judgement scene from Matthew's Gospel in this Year of Mercy.

Very practical ways of being neighbour to those we meet.

In a dialogue homily, the children were invited to think of practical ways to show their love this Mothers' Day weekend.

They were asked 'Who else do you love, when you love your Mum?'

UP WENT THE HANDS.

They had listened well to the Gospel, and watched its actions played out.

JESUS.

The children KNEW that when they do something for Mum, they do it for Jesus too.

Today we celebrate the Ascension Readings.

We join with visiting refugee families today who are most WELCOME.

Families seeking for their lives to be resurrected as they arrive from Iraq via Jordan to a new life in Australia.

Families seeking to experience the caring ways of the Gospel that the children understood on Friday.

When someone leaves us, how can we happy?

We can be happy for them, but sad for ourselves. We'll miss them.

Whether they are moving interstate or overseas, or changing jobs or schools, or retiring.

Today we hear the first reading from Acts of the Apostles and from Luke's Gospel about Jesus going.

How can the Disciples be joyful, no longer able to see Jesus physically, face to face?

Both readings speak of a POWER.

This power makes an incredible difference.

They are empowered to witness to Jesus everywhere they go.

Luke's Gospel says that they will be clothed with the power from on high.

Acts of the Apostles says that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them, and then they will be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

On this Mother's Day, we celebrate the POWER OF GOD'S LOVE in our mothers and grandmothers and people with a mothering role.

We celebrate the Ascension of Jesus, knowing that Pentecost followed.

We remember the power of God's love that has sustained our visiting families through trauma in Iraq and Syria, and in refuge in Jordan.

We celebrate the power of God's love that enables us to reach out to these families in love.

We celebrate the power of God's love in our lives, and OUR OWN CALL TO WITNESS TO GOD'S LOVE.

To be a witness.

In a world so overcome with fear at this time.

In a world so often imprisoned in selfishness and isolation.

In a world building walls to keep others out.

In a world so damaged by domestic violence and institutional abuse of power.

Pope Francis reflected on Thursday that,

"At times of sadness, suffering and sickness, amid the anguish of persecution and grief, everyone looks for a word of consolation.

We sense a powerful need for someone to be close and feel compassion for us.

We experience what it means to be disoriented, confused, more heartsick than we ever thought possible.

We look around us with uncertainty, trying to see if we can find someone who really understands our pain.

Our mind is full of questions but answers do not come.

Reason by itself is not capable of making sense of our deepest feelings, appreciating the grief we experience and providing the answers we are looking for.

At times like these, more than ever do we need the reasons of the heart, which alone can help us understand the mystery which embraces our loneliness"

This weekend we REMEMBER that we are called to WITNESS to the love of God that frees us, liberates us, gives us consolation, grants us courage to act and to advocate for others and enables us.

We are called to WITNESS IN SOLIDARITY,
to accompany people in their pain,
to be attentive to the disoriented and confused,
to be compassionate,
to appreciate the heart of others,
to learn from others,
TO SEE JESUS IN OTHERS.

The Gospel reminds us that Jesus blessed the disciples.

As a blessed community, let us stand as witnesses and disciples and pray in love for our world.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Ascension and Mothers' Day – 8 May 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/050816-ascension.cfm>]