

'LISTENING AND SPEAKING UP' – HOMILY - SUNDAY 30 JULY 2017

JUST COMPASSION

Dame Quentin Bryce, a former Governor-General of Australia, launched a new book in Brisbane last Thursday night, July 27th.

The book is - "**JUST COMPASSION**" by Wally Dethlefs.

The extended title is "Just Compassion: A Priest's Quest for Human Rights".

In the foreword to the book, Dame Quentin says,

"We have been involved in organisations dedicated to juvenile justice, that bring together inspiring, skilled, purposeful activists committed to social and legal reform.

Wally has always been at the front of these movements.

In Just Compassion, he relates the history and development of a community movement born of fine principles.

He does so with unique insight, searing honesty, and distinctive candour, uplifting our spirits and our confidence in our shared humanity.

The dry gullies, the tough times, the political conflicts are there beside the resolute conviction that change must be made and that hard work is required.

Wally pares back the layers of his relentless search for his own understanding of Christ's mission: a priest's spiritual and theological journey."

Fr Wally has been an outspoken advocate for young people from the 1970s to now.

The tragic stories he shares, the foundation work for youth advocacy,

His partnerships with youth, social reformers, lawyers, educationalists,

His reflections on Jesus and the Gospel, his life journey

All make for a powerful book of tears and hope.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

In light of today's Gospel Reading, Matthew 13:44-52

And inspired by Jesus,

May we see in our disadvantaged youth,

A true **TREASURE** and a **PEARL** of great value.

May we listen to them,

And journey with them in seeking just solutions and healing.

In light of the parable of the net and the many fish,

May we see the goodness in people

And challenge the badness in ourselves and institutions

Whenever we deny people's rights and dignity.

The Gospel says:

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.'

What a commitment made resolutely in joy.

The search for the marginalised people in our society, in our families,

in our churches, in our neighbourhoods.

Wally's book speaks of the Brisbane story, here in our midst.

We are invited, in the light of Jesus, to search out the goodness of others,
To listen to and stand with the disadvantaged,
To advocate with them.
To share the struggle and the joy.

The Gospel continues:

*'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;
on finding one pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.'*

This search is part of what the kingdom of God is like.

WHAT IS OUR TREASURE IN LIFE NOW?

Or in the light of Jesus and our mission in Jesus,
WHO IS OUR TREASURE NOW IN MY LIFE'S JOURNEY?
WHO IS THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE?

The Gospel continues:

*'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net
that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;
when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down,
and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.'*

PLENARY COUNCIL – PREPARING TO ADD OUR VOICE

In 2020, the Catholic Church in Australia will hold a Plenary Council.

WHAT IS THE GOODNESS WE NEED TO AFFIRM?

All the goodness lived every day across our nation.
All the goodness lived in ministries and respecting and serving others.

WHAT IS THE BADNESS WE NEED TO CHALLENGE?

When we cover-up, ignore, abuse, discriminate and belittle.

With so many voices and so many Church and society issues to be heard,

WHAT IS OUR TIMELINE, LEADING UP TO 2020?

WHAT STAGES OF PREPARATION?

AN INDIGENOUS EXAMPLE:

St Pope John Paul II in 1986 said to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,

*"And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life
and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others."*

Nationally, for Catholic Indigenous Peoples,
their three yearly Assembly will be in October 2018.

The Plenary Council in 2020 might seem a long way off.

But the NATSICC Assembly next year needs

consultation and listening and dialogue and empowering and advocacy now.

In a step forward, the NATSICC Chairperson has been appointed to the group for the Plenary Council.

Each Diocese could, in a spirit of listening,
Empower and increase the resourcing of the Indigenous voices
As part of the preparation.
Local community and diocesan consultations could
Lead nationally to the 2018 NATSICC Assembly
And national follow-up between October 2018 and the 2020 Plenary.

OURSELVES

Fr Wally's book speaks of listening to Jesus,
With challenges, joys, struggles, hope, and resolute action.

We pray that our lives are **a lifelong listening to Jesus.**
We pray for continual **openness** in our church
to the challenges, joys, struggles, hope and resolute action
that are our mission.

Empowered by Jesus, we pray for **people** who are our treasure, our fine pearl.
We pray for **discernment**
to see the goodness and badness within us as church community.
And to act resolutely with God in love.
Guided by the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Fr. Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Listening and Speaking Up – 30 July 2017]
[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/073017.cfm>]
[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook30072017>]

Other References:

[Just Compassion: A Priest's Quest for Human Rights by W.A. Dethlefs \(Tafina Press 2017\)](#)
[Plenary Council Executive announced](#)