

'WELCOME' HOMILY - 12 JUNE 2016

Today a young Iraqi Christian couple, recently arrived as refugees to Brisbane, sang a hymn in Arabic at our parish 9am Sunday Mass. It was a moving, emotional and spiritual experience for us all. Having arrived a few weeks ago in Australia, they wanted to share their faith with us.

It was a wonderful reminder that we are called to share our gifts with each other as part of God's family. A reminder too to take the time to thank God.

In today's Gospel of Luke, we heard of the woman who is SO MOVED BY LOVE, that she anoints the feet of Jesus after her tears fell down onto His feet. She had incredible COURAGE to focus on Jesus, and not be put off by what others were thinking. Jesus contrasts her with Simon, a Pharisee, who has invited him for a meal. In his mind, Simon is judgemental. He has discounted the woman as a well-known sinner, and now judges Jesus for allowing her to anoint him.

We too ask, each of us, how much of the woman and how much of the Pharisee, are in each of us. Do we offer hospitality like the Pharisee, with reservations, and being judgemental?

On Friday night some of the newly arrived families marched with the parish banner and an Iraqi refugee banner in the LANTERN PARADE at SOUTHBANK. Children held the smaller lanterns as a large group of people lined the walkways to applaud newly arrived refugees from around the world. It was a public welcome from people in Brisbane.

As communities in Brisbane and Logan Cities reach out in hospitality, to newly arriving families from Iraq and Syria, over these next 2 years, WE PRAY that we can follow the invitation of today's Gospel and be GENUINE in WELCOME. WELCOME with a large HEART.

After today's homily, our Parish Sacramental Co-ordinator, Helen, spoke to the parents and children preparing for Confirmation in August. Using a current medical story and a personal reflection, Helen invited us to live with a large heart in our faith journey.

May we be open-hearted in our welcoming and our linked faith journeys. May we follow the COURAGE OF THE WOMAN IN TODAY'S GOSPEL, and put our service of Jesus first as we care for the newly arrived.

May we not be put off by our own failings.
or by what some Australians think about others.

May we live our faith with big hearts, open to God and our neighbour.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – ‘Welcome’ – 12 June 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/061216.cfm>]