

HOMILY NOTES – First Sunday in Chatswood

I know that many of you have been wondering just who we are and what we are on about since the announcement was made a few months ago by Bishop David that the Michaelites would be assuming responsibility for the pastoral care of this parish.

So I thought that today I would use my homily time to make a few brief points about the Congregation, about who we are and what we stand for.

Christo-Centric:

- As Michaelites we are centred on the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the focus and purpose of our life and ministry.
- All that we do – liturgy, sacraments, the way the church looks and feels all derives from this focus on Christ and are the means to bring us into a closer relationship with Jesus through prayers and devotions.

We are a Religious Congregation:

- We are a religious congregation of priests – so we are different to diocesan priests in the way we live and work in the parish.
- We work in a collegial style – as a team of Michaelites we live in the parish to minister collectively to our people in the spirit of our charism. No one member of the Congregation has a specific role, we all work together collaboratively to minister to the parish.
- We live in community in the presbytery and live as fraternal brothers on the authority of our Superior-General who, in essence is our Bishop and oversees the workings of the Congregation around the world.
- We take the evangelical vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and live our lives in fidelity to these vows.

Michaelite Spirituality and Charism

- While we are driven in our lives by our love for and desire to be like Jesus Christ, we do have our own Charism and spirituality that sets all Michaelites apart from other religious congregations.
- Our charism is quite simply the evangelisation and proclamation of the gospel to young people and in our days those who are spiritually neglected – be they young or old . We seek to serve the Church wherever she needs in ministering the values and message of the Gospel
- We do this under the patronage of St Michael who is our spiritual patron. Like St Michael, we seek to serve God and His Church. One thing you will notice is that at the end of each Mass we recite the prayer to St Michael – this is part of our charism and history and is a feature of every Michaelite parish around the world.
- Since the Church is the mystical body of Jesus, we follow Jesus' command that the church is built on the rock of St Peter. Therefore, we are united in our ministry to the Holy Father and are guided by the example of the Holy Father and Bishop David, who in communion with the successor of St Peter, guides us in how we approach Church and liturgy.

- The documents that the Church issues on faith, morals and worship are critical to our model of Church and enable us to minister more effectively to our people and our world – as part of the universal Catholic Church.
- We also place importance in the Diocesan plan as a means to guiding us in our unique ministry to the people of Chatswood.
- Given our Charism and spirituality, we have a number of devotions particularly to St Michael and the Angels.
- We also have devotions that we strive to follow in particular devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus to support us through daily recitation of the Rosary and honouring Mary as the model of all discipleship.
- We also have devotion to Divine Mercy, the Saints and in particular Blessed Mary Mackillop. We pray in communion with the saints for the visible and invisible Church.
- As a Congregation we have a history – born in Poland and now spread throughout the world and so we have a devotion to members of our Congregation who have been raised by the church to the altar of the Saints – in particular our Founder Blessed Bronislaw Markiweicz and Blesseds Władysław and Wojciech, Michaelites who were martyred for the faith in Nazi concentration camps.
- We are also a missionary congregation and here in our region we have Michaelites from this province working as missionaries in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. We see missionary work as a natural extension of our work here in Australia and of our call to ministry and so are proud to support the work of our Michaelites who are working in PNG.

New Evangelisation.

- Given that we work in the contemporary world, we are inspired by John Paul II's call to the New Evangelisation. We seek new ways and means to reach out to those calling out for knowledge of Jesus and for those who know Jesus but have walked away from embracing his message.

Conclusion

- Chatswood parish has been blessed to have so many priests minister to its people since its foundation.
- We hope to build on the legacy of the past, mindful that there will be differences in the way we approach our ministry but also confident that with our contributions this parish will continue to remain a lively witness to the presence of Christ in our community and a living witness to the heritage and tradition of the church universal.