

THE HOMILY

1 St. Peter 3:8-15 & St. Luke 5:1-11

May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord our strength and our Redeemer

In today's Epistle, St Paul says:

"Finally, all of you, have unity of mind" or "Be of one mind, one with another."

In life, at work or amongst friends, and more especially in our homes, with our spouse and children, being of 'one mind' is a very important thing. That doesn't mean we can't disagree, but that, fundamentally, we have a similar purpose, a shared faith and a common goal. This will bring peace.

The men and women of the world are divided and have an approach to life that is "every man for himself/herself". Instead, the Scripture urges us to be united; to have one mind — *"the mind which was in Christ Jesus"*. Having that mind will bring a serenity and love into every situation and will eliminate the pettiness that can so often cause upset and bad feeling.

"Do not repay evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing."

(1 Peter 3:9) Here, we are called to look at the example of Jesus; He who knew no sin and died a sinner's death that He might pay our penalties. Jesus returned evil with good and purchased our redemption. St. Peter reminds us that we should live that same way.

He also gives a stern reminder: *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers : but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.."*

Do as the Lord tells you, and develop a unified and Christ-like mind, and the blessings will most surely come your way.

The Gospel today is a great piece of Scripture, for it shows our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord of creation, and Lord of surprises also! The Disciples are amazed that a non-fisherman could bring them a haul of so many fishes. They became fearful....

Jesus had sought these men out and knew their characters and the potential in each of them. As they humbly, and wonderfully, laid down their nets and left their boats, a new and expanding life experience was about to open up before them.

Jesus said; *"Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men"*

They must have wondered what he was talking about, but they went with Him anyway... perhaps men would be easier to catch than fish? They were to be in for a big surprise!

I seem to remember Jesus saying similar words of encouragement in the Upper Room, much later in their journey? Disheartened and afraid, Jesus surprises them once again, this time with His own appearing after His Resurrection. He says: *"Peace be with you, as the Father sent me, so send I you...."*[Jn Ch 20] and their next chapter begins...

The Gospel reading begins in the shallows of the lake of Gennesaret, and ends in the deep water, with a mighty catch. The mighty catch only happened when they left the shallows and took some risks..."*Launch into the deep...."* said Jesus.

Modern day Christians are just as bound to their car, their house payments and their job as those first disciples were tied to their fishing boats. This was not recreational – it was their livelihood. It was not until they heard the voice of Jesus and followed Him, that their lives began to change – and so it will be for us.

While we paddle about in the shallows of our spirituality, while we skilfully avoid real commitment, we will remain like children who run away, even from the smallest ripples on the shore.

Only when we seek the *'mind of Christ'* and obey His call or instruction and *Launch into the deep* will we experience the growth and satisfaction that our living faith can truly give us.

The deep waters are dangerous and uncharted. They can be full of unseen things, and challenges for which we don't think we are prepared, but like a deep-sea fisherman, or a surfer, only in the deep waters will real satisfaction be found.

I will use the example of our own Brother Ronnie OSG., of the parish of Holy Cross, Pretoria to show you the truth of what we are exploring. For many years (perhaps 20 or more) he sought a deeper spiritual commitment...but he paddled in the shallows and 'explore' was all he did. In 2014, however, he took the plunge into the deep...he took his monastic vows and a whole new life opened up before him. He developed a powerful ministry of prayer and became a chaplain to a large hospital. Recently, in 2019, this *launch into the deep* took him further, as he was made a Deacon in the church. You see, unless there is action and commitment, there can be no growth.

Do you wish to grow and develop as the Disciples did? *Launch into the deep* and testify to your faith. Do you feel that you would like a more meaningful prayer life? *Launch into the deep* and fall upon your knees and PRAY – don't think about it, do it! Do you wish for a deeper knowledge of your Scriptures? *Launch into the deep* and truly read and study God's Word – no more shallow reading, but an in-depth exploration of His vibrant message to His people. Is there more to you than meets the eye? Be like Br Ronnie and take a leap of faith and commitment and see where God will take you.... and, *Fear not...*and...know His Peace, for the Good Shepherd will guide your path.

In the Name + of The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost, Amen!

On Thursday, 1st July, Fr Klaus Kuhne and I buried our dear friend and Chancellor of our Diocese, Hon Paul Johannes du Plessis. Fr Klaus preached an outstanding sermon, and I thought you should be able to enjoy it too.

Funeral sermon in memory of Paul Johannes du Plessis

By: Father Klaus Kühne, St Andrew's Traditional Anglican Church, Mondeor/Suideroord, Johannesburg

1 July, 2021

Text: 2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Very occasionally, one has the privilege of getting to know a great and a good man.

Paul was such a man.

His sudden death is a grievous loss, not only for the family, but also for our parish and our church.

Today, we thank God for his life and witness. The Christian faith made perfect sense to Paul, because his legal training would not permit believing a collection of myths or legends, no matter how cunningly worded and presented. The Bible, as God's Word for mankind, and the Good News of Jesus, the Messiah, Saviour and Lord, in particular, was meat and drink to Paul.

Here was a man whose whole life was under the direct authority of God. Not a god of his own creating, but the Creator of the universe and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's grace sought Paul out and he came to a deep and authentic personal faith. A faith he has faithfully shared with so many others.

I am personally fed up this afternoon, because I was looking forward to hearing many more of his sermons. In this parish, the laity are not second-class citizens – their ministry is highly valued and encouraged. Paul, in addition to his

official duties as Chancellor of our Church and Principal of Holy Trinity Seminary, was a regular preacher at Mass and also led a vibrant international Bible study thanks to the miracle of modern information technology.

Now it seems as if all this deep knowledge and dedication has been lost.

It hasn't.

If one thinks of the vast ocean of worthless activity and wasted talent in the world, we can only humbly thank God in the knowledge that what Paul sowed will still be harvested for a very long time to come. What is done on behalf of God, in the name of God, out of love and with great care and devotion, has no sell by date.

Paul's legacy as a legal practitioner stands on its own. I know he liked playing *old man's marbles*, and while he also bent the knee on the bowling green, it is his work as a Christian in the church and the wider community, that has enriched the most lives.

The Christian faith is more often than not taken on board because of the example of a Christian's life. How easy to be a hypocrite or a stone faced and joyless fundamentalist – Paul's life radiated his faith and deep concern for others. He practiced what he preached.

Now Bronwyn and the family have to carry on without a husband, a father, and grandfather. There is a Paul-shaped gap, but God's loving kindness and mercy will bring comfort and strength.

Paradoxically, we rejoice because of the tears and pain: how awful if this afternoon we were gathered to say: thank God he's gone!

Yes, Paul fought the good fight, clad in the armour of God, he finished the race, leaving gratitude and respect in his wake; God will crown him with the crown of righteousness, not as a reward for being a good and a great man, but because Jesus transformed the old Paul into the new Paul who goes before us and is not lost and forgotten.

Until we meet again.

Amen.



One of my most precious pictures. Fr Martin Magoleng and Chancellor Paul du Plessis standing watch over the newly ordained Deacons (2019). Two true Disciples and godly leaders in our church, now with the Lord in glory!