

Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Most people in Australia would have had some idea that the Grand Final of the AFL was held in Melbourne today/yesterday. Even those who have very little interest in Aussie rules Football were probably able to tell us that one of the teams from Sydney was playing in its first Grand Final. Many others in Australia would have felt very connected with what happened at the MCG this/yesterday afternoon.

We live in a world where people choose to be connected or disconnected with a whole range of other people. We have just heard Jesus tell a parable about a man who choose not to be connected to another man who was physically very close to him. One man was rich and lived in great comfort. The other was so poor and sick that he longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. In time both men died. The poor man was carried by angels into heaven. The rich man was buried.

The lack of connection that the rich chose to live by was magnified after his death. We are told that there was a great gap between him suffering in Hades, and the poor man enjoying his reward in heaven. The gap was so great that it could not be crossed.

Today we are invited to reflect upon how we use one of the modern ways of connecting with each other; how we cross the gap between each other in our digital world. The theme for this year's Social Justice Statement is "Making It Real, Genuine human encounter in our digital world." The question is asked "Does the current information system contribute to the betterment of the human person? Does information technology make people more spiritually mature, more aware of the dignity of their humanity, more responsible to others, in particular to the neediest and the weakest?" We will use a little bit of technology to have a look at how this year's statement might answer some of those questions.

Show PowerPoint!

There are a few printed copies of the Statement available in the foyer. Those who are connected to the internet can download and read a digital copy of the statement. It is worth the time and trouble to do so.

The other kind of connection that I would like to talk about today is the connection that we have with one another as members of the Australian Church preparing for the Plenary Council. Many of us were involved in the first stage of the preparation when we answered the question, "What do you think God is asking of the Church of Australia?" Now we are invited to take part in

the second stage of the preparation. The 220,000 responses to that question that we answered have been grouped into six themes. Those themes are listed on the sheet that has been put on the pews. This stage is going to be more difficult. We are invited into a process where we prayerfully discern what we can do to make ourselves, our parish, our Australian Church a Christ-centred community that lives according to those themes.

The process needs us to gather with a few other people who will prayerfully listen with us to what the Holy Spirit is calling our Church to be. We are offering two different ways to do this. The first is to gather in the Parish Hall at Strathalbyn on Sunday 27th. October, to have a shared meal together and then to join with others who have chosen the same theme as ourselves in the process of discernment. The other is to meet in our home or in the home of someone else who has chosen the same theme as we have chosen and to take part in the process there.

To prepare for that we need you to fill out the invitation sheet today. Choose if you are willing to take up this invitation. Pick in order the themes that you feel drawn to. Choose if you would like to meet in the Parish Hall or in your own or someone else's home. Hand the forms in today if you can, or by next Sunday. Quite a bit of background work will need to be done for this process to

work well and the Parish Pastoral Council needs a couple of weeks to do that. I think it will be worth the effort.