

"Remember, remember the Fifth of November" rhymes the folk verse recalling Guy Fawkes' foiled plot 409 years ago today. The attempted assassination of king and parliament magnified anti-Catholic sentiment which waxed and waned thereafter. When Edwin and Ruth Gould migrated from England to Australia in the 1850s, for instance, the Catholic hierarchy was just being re-established in Britain, and this occasioned a whole new round of bonfires of pope dolls and guys which continues to this day on this night in Britain.

Edwin and Ruth settled in Parramatta and raised eight children here. The town was on the up and up. Alongside Old Government House, the Protestant churches and the pubs, new buildings were springing up such as a new St Patrick's Church on this site and a new gaol on O'Connell Street, and both were said to draw upon the same demographic... The next generation added even grander buildings, such as the Town Hall and the spire of St Patrick's. Edwin and Ruth's son, Albert Edward Gould, was the government builder and he built much of Parramatta Hospital and schools such as Arthur Phillip High. His grandest commission still surviving is Murphy House beside our cathedral. Though he built the Catholic presbytery, Albert was a freemason and staunch Presbyterian who would happily "remember the 5<sup>th</sup> of November" by burning a papal effigy or two. With his wife Jane he also had eight children, including Daphne, born in 1902 at their home in Rosehill Street.



Daphne Gould and her siblings were presumably christened at St Andrew's Kirk along Marsden Street. Astonished as these masons would have been that their church is now a Bavarian beer hall, they'd have been even more agog that their descendant would be Catholic Bishop of Parramatta. But there you are: Edwin and Ruth Gould's granddaughter Daphne was my grandmother. She married George Fisher and converted to Catholicism. The family were not amused and Daphne rarely returned to Parramatta, but her first grandson did – as Bishop. God in His providence and humour delights in such ironies: tonight I give Him and all of you my heartfelt thanks for nearly five very happy years beside the house my family built.

To Bishop Kevin Manning, Emeritus Bishop of Parramatta, my former Vicars-General Fr Peter Williams and Fr Chris de Souza, Msgr Victor Martinez, my brother clergy and seminarians;

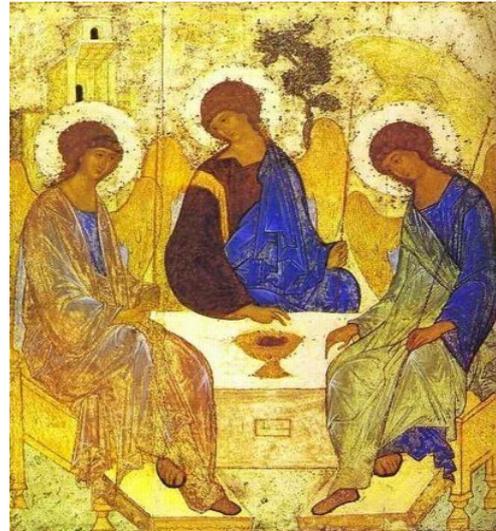
To my fellow religious including Sr Catherine Ryan RSM, Congregational Leader of the Parramatta Mercies, and leaders or representatives of several other religious congregations;

To Mr Michael Digges, Business Manager of the Diocese, Mr Greg Whitby, Executive Director of Catholic Education, Mr John Kelly, Executive Director of CatholicCare, and other chancery and agency leaders, committee members and staff, my collaborators in leadership and service of this diocese these years past;

To Dr Geoff Lee, Member for Parramatta, Councillors and other civic dignitaries;

To Professor Hayden Ramsay, Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Notre Dame, Dr Ryan Messmore, President of Campion College, and other education leaders, as well as business and union officials, benefactors and friends of the Diocese;

To all of you, dear lay faithful of Parramatta: welcome to tonight's Mass of Thanksgiving.



### *The best things in life come in threes*

Three wise men and three wise monkeys, three angels at Mamre and three sons of Noah, three bears and three blind mice, three French hens and three little pigs, three musketeers and three stooges, and – in the Diocese of Parramatta – Three Sisters – as well as, so far, three bishops... Our clergy will have their own views on whether the three bishops were more wise men or monkeys, blind mice or musketeers! But the received wisdom is that *the best things in life come in threes*.

For Christians, of course, that's no accident, for we are blessed to know that God is a Trinity of persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some mystics have suggested that if we human beings are the image of God, His Trinity must be reflected in each of us: in our mind-body-spirit or in our memory-imagination-reason or in our deep instinct to friendship, family, communion. St Paul was thinking this way when he taught that "only three things endure: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love" (1Cor ch 13). Faith

promises us life with God forever, hope dares strive for it, and love makes us want it more than anything (Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* 7; St Thomas Aquinas, *ST* IIa-IIae). These three 'theological virtues' are the basis of communion between Creator and creature.



And this, my dear friends, is what it's all about. The Church today encompasses 1.2 billion faithful organized into 3,000 dioceses and 222,000 parishes, offering constant worship to God and service to humanity. It comprises 5,000 bishops, 456,000 clergy, 761,000 religious and 120,000 seminarians, leading and serving, preaching and teaching, praying and sanctifying. It has 139,000 schools with 51 million students, 1400 universities, 39,000 hospitals, clinics and nursing homes, 10,000 orphanages, umpteens welfare services. And all this is rightly about three things and three things only: faith, hope and charity. This is what the Church is for; what this diocese is for; what the bishop is for.

### ***Faith in the Diocese of Parramatta***

"You did not choose me; no, I chose you." God's election is called *the gift of faith* and our response *the act of faith*. Such faith is very evident in this Diocese. In this very Catholic part of Australia

about a third of the population – over three hundred thousand – identify as Catholics. Our practising rate of 1 in 6 has fallen to the same levels of which Polding complained when he came to consecrate the first St Patrick's; though some of our parishes boast rates as high as 40% and our diocesan average is better than most parts of the Western world today. Of course, we know that many people connect with our diocese in other ways, such as through our schools, healthcare, aged care, welfare, youth events and other ministries. And happily our people express their faith not just at church but in lives of Christian leadership, service and devotion, above all in making their homes 'domestic churches' where faith and morals are transmitted down the generations. But we cannot be content with 5 out of 6 of us absent: we must long for their return, reach out to them more effectively, and make sure they have hospitable and holy parishes to come home to.



As Bishop of Parramatta it has been my privilege to feed that faith by offering the Holy Sacrifice all around the diocese but especially at this altar; by confirming young people; by teaching through *Outlook*, DVDs, pastoral letters and from this cathedra; and by trying my best to lead and grow and support our clergy, from

seminary to ordination and then all the way to last rites and burial. These are precious memories for me that I take with me to my new home. They are testimony to faith alive and active in the Diocese of Parramatta.

### *Hope in the Diocese of Parramatta*

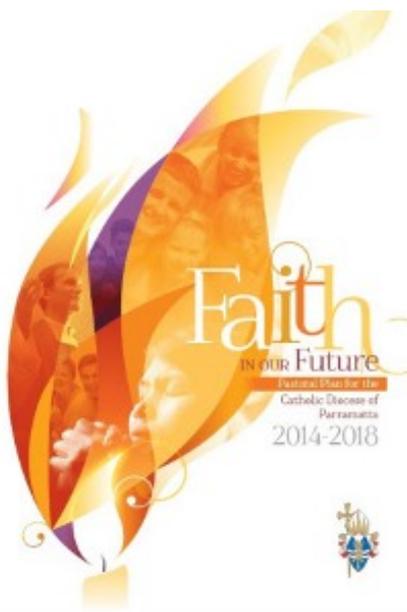
This is also a Diocese of great *hope*. One recent expression of that hope is our diocesan pastoral plan, *Faith in Our Future*. After a great deal of consultation and distillation, we launched our blueprint for growing the faith and the faithful of Parramatta last Easter. It calls our Diocese to inhale deeply from the sources and supports of our faith (word, sacrament and community) and then to exhale in outreach to families, youth, communities, the connected and disconnected. With St Peter it calls us to be ready to give people reasons for the hope that is in us (1Pet 3:15).



If you consider the extraordinary number and vitality of our youth groups, the generosity of our clergy, the gifts of our lay people, the richness of our ethnic groups, the zeal of our schools, the outreach of our agencies, there are so many reasons to hope. But let me highlight just one: every time I visit our seminary, for a

meeting, meal or to interview our seminarians, I come back elated. It is medicine for the soul, to get to know these young men so full of idealism, of love of God and people, ready and willing to serve. If you wanted a cause for hope, meet our seminarians! Better still, if you are free to, join up and give us even more reasons to hope!

Of course, such fine young men don't just arrive like Superman in a space capsule from Krypton: they come from Catholic families, parishes, communities. If there are so many reasons for the hope that is in us, there is also much potential in Western Sydney still to be realized in the building up of God's Kingdom!



### ***Love in the Diocese of Parramatta***

Our Gospel passage tonight comes from another farewell Mass, when Jesus took leave of His disciples. At that Last Supper He raised them to a dignity unknown in ancient religions: no longer were they servants or disciples – from that night forward they were His *friends* (Jn 15:9-17). So when St Luke wrote his Gospel and its sequel for *Theophilus* (Acts 1:1), which is Greek for 'friend of God', he

was writing *to us*. But the ancients knew that true friendship is only possible between relative equals: for God to *befriend* us would require something as radical as His lowering Himself to becoming one of us or His raising us up to be His quasi-equals. Both would be blasphemous ideas, were they not precisely what God did. But that divine intimacy came at a cost. It cost Jesus everything: His divinity, His humanity, His very life, all poured out on the altar of the cross. No greater love could He show, could any man show, that while we were still His enemies, He made us His friends. Such love redeems, heals, elevates. It chooses and teaches and sends.



The best things in life come in threes and St Augustine said that love requires Three: a lover, a beloved and the love between them (De Trinitate, VIII, 8). That, of course, is the story of the Trinity and it is the story of our Diocese too. When I think of the welcome and devotion I've experienced in our parishes; of my pilgrimages and other encounters with young people; of fruitful conversations with pastors, lay leaders and so many faithful; of seeing the mission of our schools signalled in the daily Angelus and strengthened by formation of staff and renewal of curriculum; of the many new initiatives of CatholicCare: all these things and more are signs of love in action. But there is always more to do, if we are to live as,

Paul exhorts, "in sincere compassion, kindness and humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with another and forgiving each other" (Col 3:12-17) with the chasuble or overalls of love outside and the peace of Christ within.



For nearly five years I've been privileged to be shepherd under that baldachin. It is an artist's representation of the halo of the Holy Spirit descending upon the Church at Pentecost and upon the gifts at the consecration. Yet this nimbus of glory also looks like the Crown of Thorns. In many ways this double aspect – glory and gory, empowerment and challenge – are the story of the Christian life and certainly of priestly and episcopal ministry. But I must confess that my Parramatta mitre has felt more halo than crown of thorns: whatever the travails of this office, the joys have been much greater, and I have been buoyed by your faith, hope and love. With St Paul I conclude my ministry among you tonight with these words: "I thank my God every time I think of you, praying for you with joy and thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from my first day until now. And I am confident that He who began this good work in you will bring it to completion." (Phil 1:3-6)

Thank you, Briney, for your kind words. As a faithful parishioner, wife, Catholic school teacher, youth leader, and all-round good gal I've been very grateful for your support and that of support. I remember with great fondness witnessing you renewing your wedding vows at Cana of Galilee on the way to World Youth Day and seeing Jess lift you up about three meters into the air to kiss you. Marriages and families like yours are a huge part of what sustains me and my brother clergy.

Tonight I give thanks to Almighty God for the time I have had in the Diocese of Parramatta and to each of you for joining me in that. I am grateful to our distinguished guests, including our civic leaders, whose presence betokens the many ways Church and state collaborate for the good of Western Sydney. For tonight's celebration and the other farewell events I am especially grateful to Fr Peter Williams and the Farewell Committee; to Fr John Paul Escarlan and our seminarians, acolytes and servers; and to Mr Bernard Kirkpatrick and our excellent choir, who yet again have excelled themselves.

It has been my privilege to serve the faithful of this Diocese, while delighting in their diversity and devotion, their youthfulness and maturity, their enthusiasm and wisdom. To my collaborators in leading the parishes, schools and agencies of the diocese, our employees and volunteers, religious, seminarians and lay faithful, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Tonight our diocese also bids farewell to Mr Michael Digges who has been our excellent Business Manager, and to Antoine Kazzi and David Collits of my personal staff: on behalf of the Diocese I thank you for your outstanding service. To all the staff of the Chancery and to Helen, Bernadette, Patrick and Lynn who have served on my personal staff, another big thank you: you have backed me and the diocese through a period of growth and change, with generosity and loyalty.

Chief among my collaborators are of course my brother clergy. You are the ones teaching and sanctifying in our parishes, preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, offering prayer and sacrifice to God, leading and serving, day in and day out. My Vicars-General, first the now-Bishop Bob McGuckin, then Frs Peter Williams and Chris de Souza, have been the best of supports to me. Like the story in *Exodus* chapter 17 of Israel's battle with the Amelikites, these latter-day Aaron and Hur have held up the arms of this sometimes exhausted Moses and ensured things went well for Israel. With Michael Digges they have been my curia, advisers and friends, and I thank all three for their enormous personal support. I also thank my episcopal vicars, consultors and deans for their particular assistance in governing the Diocese.

Tonight I would like to honour three of these beloved priests of our diocese in particular. Father Michael O'Callaghan was born in 1942 and holds degrees in Accountancy, Theology and

Counselling. As a Carmelite he trained for the priesthood at Yarra Theological Union and St Paul's National Seminary, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1976. He served as Vocations and Youth Director, Prior and Parish Priest. In 1987 he joined the Diocese of Parramatta and served in the Parishes of Seven Hills, Leura, Richmond and Baulkham Hills. He has also been a regional dean, Member of the Council of Priests, Consultor and Episcopal Vicar of Clergy. In recognition of his generous priestly service, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has been pleased to award to Fr Mick the Cross "pro Ecclesia et Pontifice".

Father John Boyle was born in 1945, attended Parramatta Marist, St. Columba's Seminary Springwood and St. Patrick's Manly. He obtained a Masters Degree in Theology and was ordained to the priesthood in 1971 by Cardinal Gilroy. Since then he has served in the Parishes of Gymea, Darlinghurst, The Entrance, Haberfield, Ryde, Castle Hill, Westmead, Parramatta, Seven Hills and again Castle Hill. Since 1984 he has been a Chaplain of the Royal Australian Air Force. As Dean of this Cathedral from 1991 to 2000, he spearheaded its reconstruction after it was burned down. He has been a member of the Council of Priests, Consultor, regional dean and Episcopal Vicar for Chaplaincies and Pastoral Associates. In recognition of his outstanding priestly service, the Holy Father has been pleased to appoint Fr John Boyle a Chaplain to His Holiness. Congratulations Squadron Leader and now Monsignor Boyle.

Father Ron McFarlane was also born in 1945. He entered the Columban Seminary in 1964 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1970 by Cardinal Knox. He joined the Archdiocese of Sydney (and at its separation the Diocese of Parramatta), serving in the Parishes of Ryde, Concord, Berala, Kingsgrove, Belmore, Toongabbie, North Rocks, Katoomba and, for many years now, Marayong. He has also been a chaplain to the Solo Parents Ministry, regional dean, member of the Council of Priests, Consultor, Pastoral Director of the Seminary, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, and a member of several diocesan committees. He is currently Chancellor of the Diocese. In recognition of his outstanding priestly service, Pope Francis has been pleased to appoint Fr Ron Macfarlane as a Chaplain to His Holiness. Congratulations Monsignor Macfarlane.

My thanks to Fr Arthur Bridge and the Honours Committee for their assistance for these and all the previous awards.

To all of you, the excellent clergy and lay faithful of the Diocese of Parramatta: thank you. You are the reason God put me in the Diocese of Parramatta for the four years, ten months and four days from the day I was announced as your bishop to the day, one week from now, when it will be complete. You are why God in his strange providence brought me back to the house my family built and to this house of God that you built. May He bless you always!