



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Message for BBNeighbourhoods
27 September 2021

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Last Sunday I had the joy of joining with the Catholic community at Asquith in the Parish of Ku-ring-gai Chase for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Saint Patrick's church. It was a somewhat bittersweet moment. When Archbishop Freeman opened and blessed the church building on 19 September 1971, the local community turned out in great numbers. Fifty years later, due to the COVID pandemic and the associated government health orders, the local community participated via livestreaming. It was hardly the way any of us envisaged celebrating this significant event in the life of Saint Patrick's community. And yet, we did celebrate. The government restrictions might keep us from our church buildings, but they do not keep us from being the Church, the body of Christ, the living disciples of Jesus our Saviour.

Over these past few months of physical separation, I have become more deeply aware of the spiritually connected people that we are. As Saint Mark reminds us in the Gospel, in our faith we are "for Christ" because we "belong to Christ" ([cf. Mark 9:40-41](#)). It is easy to fall into the trap of focusing on the negative and painful dimensions of life, especially when there is so much suffering around us. And yet, as I read the history of the church building and the parish, I could not help but be inspired by the grit and determination, along with the faith and zeal for the Lord, of Christ's lay faithful – women and men, the priests, and the religious – who claim Saint Patrick's as their spiritual home.

The Catholic community at Asquith has long made Saint Patrick's a Centre of worship; a home of spiritual devotion; the locus of the sacraments; a place of community gathering; and the launch pad for mission so that Jesus Christ is rightly our beginning and end. The early challenges that pressed upon the first Catholics who gathered there almost 100 years ago, never held them back. With their indomitable spirit, fortified by tremendous faith, they forged ahead not merely to build buildings, but to foster and support their mission as Catholic Christians in the world.

The celebration on Sunday was one of recognition of those who have gone before us. It was rightly a celebration of thanksgiving for the many good works of God in and through the community. It was and still is an inspiration to the whole community of the Church of Broken Bay for our ongoing mission and our imminent return to worship in our church buildings.

Our work of evangelisation and catechesis has never seemed so urgent as what it is in these times. It is not a work for this one or that, for him or her, for old or young. The work to be taken up, through the power of the Holy Spirit, belongs to God and each one of us baptized into Christ has a responsibility and a duty to be co-workers with the Lord.



My brothers and sisters, all our parishes have the love of Christ as their foundation stone. It was because of His love that our forebears, priests and people, gathered as a community of Catholic communities. Faith was the centre of their lives, their families, their mission in the world.

My prayer is that the occasion of the golden Jubilee of Saint Patrick's church at Asquith might provide for us an opportunity for deep and prayerful reflection upon the past. That, in a strange time and circumstance, we will take every opportunity to reconnect in the communion of Christ, despite the challenges of this year. And that as we return physically to one another, we will have a deeper sense of our spiritual communion as disciples of the Lord, as living members of the Catholic Church. May God bless you and your families, and may Saint Patrick continue to intercede for us.

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