

## **Vox Episcopi– the Voice of the Bishop**

13 April 2022

Last night at our Cathedral in Waitara we celebrated a beautiful and joyous Mass – the Chrism Mass.

It was wonderful to see our clergy gather with so many from our parishes throughout the Diocese.

The Cathedral was full for one of the most important liturgies in our Church calendar.

All the priests renewed their ordination promises while the entire gathering was committed to praying for the priests and me, the bishop.

The Chrism Mass liturgy is also the time blessing and consecrating of oils used in the pastoral and sacramental life of the Church.

The Oil of Catechumens, used with the Sacrament of Baptism; the Oil of the Infirm, used in the anointing of the sick; and the Oil of Chrism, fragrantly perfumed and used in the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders and also in the dedication ceremony of a church when the Bishop anoints the new altar and the church building. At the end of the Mass our priests took bottles of these oils back to their parishes for use in the coming year.

While the Chrism Mass is a solemn occasion, we also experience the joy of the Gospel, the fruit of the love of God, made visible in Jesus Christ. It is that same joy which brings to birth a peace that is everlasting. Love, joy, and peace are the promise of eternal life in Christ.

Through our baptismal priesthood, we all share in the mission of Christ, and while our anointing of ministerial priests sets them apart it never separates us from the People of God. This is why the ordinary place of every ordained priest is in the midst of people, in relationship to others.

My sisters and brothers, please pray for our priests, especially this Holy Week, to be good and faithful shepherds after the heart of Christ. That being more like Christ they will remain close to you.

This week we leave Lent and enter the Easter Triduum or “period of three days” –during which we celebrate the Paschal Mystery - the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday; Good Friday, a day of fasting when we reflect deeply upon the Passion of Christ and make the Stations of the Cross; Holy Saturday when catechumens are initiated into the body of Christ; and then Easter Sunday, the proclamation from the empty tomb, that Christ is Risen!

It is this time, the passion and resurrection of Christ, which is the culmination of the entire liturgical year.

We will hear and repeat the words from Psalm 118:24 – “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad,” as we proclaim a new way of life with Jesus Christ, our saviour, who is risen from the dead.

It is the time to make real the peace of Christ - despite those who threaten with force, injustice, abuse and prejudice.

The peace of Christ is the goal of our activities, be they individual or collective.

May the peace of the Risen Christ reign in our hearts, in our community, and in our world.

With my prayers and blessing

+ Anthony