

## Homily

Br. Thiventhiran Sebastiyam Pillai

Mass of Profession of Perpetual Vows

St. Joseph's Church

Glasthule

Co. Dublin

29 May 2021

As we gather here today to celebrate the Eucharist on this happy occasion of Brother Theiva profession of Perpetual Vows as a Presentation Brother. We welcome all present here and on the catholic service website to St. Joseph's Church, Glasthule, Co. Dublin, We especially welcome those how are viewing the service from overseas, Br. Theiva Family, Relative and friends.

There have probably been many times when you have been driving your car that you have come to what we call a "crossroads". This is when two or more roads intersect. At these crossroads, you need to decide which way to go!

There are often crossroads experiences in our lives. We come to a point where we can go in two or more directions, and need to decide which way to go. Such crossroads experiences include decisions about our careers, our vocation journey, our behaviour towards society and the environment.

A Bible character who often found himself at the crossroads was Abram. He didn't always make the right Spiritual choices, but very often he did.

In today's First Reading, Abram had to decide which road to take would it be the road to God or would he take a different road? In the text today God called Abram to follow him and promised him great blessings. Abram had to choose whether he would follow the true God or follow the false God's of his relatives. He chose to follow the road to God. After deciding to follow God, God says to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you (Genesis 12:1). Brother Theiva received his call, he took time to discern before he answering 'YES' and deciding to become a Presentation Brother. Theiva left his country, his people and his father's household. Theiva arrived in a strange country in 2011; he must have been very confused and fearful as he arrived in Ireland, which would have been completely different from his own country, his beloved Sri Lanka.

Brother Theiva's journey of formation has taken him through the ups and downs of religious life. He has embraced Ireland and its culture, just as Abram had, but neither of them forgot their own beloved country and culture.

The gospel today is a vision and mission statement of Jesus. It highlights the love of Jesus for us, his call, and his hope that we will bear fruit.

When John talks about the love of God in today's Gospel reading, he is clear what he means – "this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us". The same message is underlined in the Gospel: "You did not choose me, no, I chose you". We don't have to turn up at an interview to discover if God will choose us or not: God has already made an everlasting decision to love us. God's love is not an issue; it is not a matter of speculation. It is there. It is a fact.

God's love is first, and it is only because of the primacy of God's love that we have the power and the freedom to choose God.

Our baptism is the first recalling of that love, promised to us in care and protection for this life and into eternity. It joins us into the community of love received and love shared.

More than that – it is a call to follow in love. Brother Theiva is willing to take on the characteristics of being a follower of Jesus in care, love and compassion for others by following this call.

More still – we witness today the bearing of this fruit of listening to that call. The call of Jesus is to share in the salvation of the world, in making the world a better place for everybody to live in. As Theiva is a follower of Jesus, he is committed to the care of the earth and care for others. Love for the earth and love of each other is 'fruit that will last.

For us all here present or online it is a high calling, challenging to us at all ages – making decisions about life and where the gospel of Jesus influences our decision; to follow through on our promise to serve God well at all ages of life, and to surrender much to him in elder years.

The love, the call and our service are at the root of a great and sustaining joy in life as Jesus wants 'our joy to be complete' and we join our lives to his vision of the world and how it might be.

When we reflect on the lives of St Teresa of Calcutta and St Therese of Lisieux, we see that they truly understood and lived this gospel. Their way of life – their goal – was to do everything with love – to see the face of Christ in everyone with whom they interacted. But they were saintly individuals, you might say. Yes, they were. How could St Teresa of Calcutta care so tenderly for the dying, the wretched, the foul-smelling? How did St Therese' treat with only kindness the nuns who were jealous of her and downright mean? They obtained much grace to love as Jesus loves through prayer. Both of these great, yet humble women began their days with extended time in the Presence of Our Lord. Brother Theiva is following in the steps of these women. His

devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to daily and private prayer, has helped him to fulfil his calling.

Brother Theiva today you are making your perpetual profession of vows here in St. Joseph's Church, Glasthule, Co. Dublin. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience which you pronounce today, are calling you to live simply, to love inclusively and to listen for God's call in the community of the Brotherhood and the sign of the times. I congratulate you on making this response today and I pray that you, too, like Blessed Edmund Rice, will have a heart for the poor.

Theiva, on behalf of the Brothers I thank your own family and friends who nurtured and supported your call. I thank especially Brothers Barry, Richard, Vincent, Raj and Simon and also the late Brothers Terence and Claver who have accompanied you both in Killarney and Glasthule.

We pray that Jesus will continue to bless him and protect him as he continues his journey as a Presentation Brother, wherever his ministry takes him.

May Mary of the Presentation, Our Lady of Madhu guide your way.

May Blessed Edmund Rice, our founder and Blessed Joseph Vas, the apostle of Sri Lanka inspire you! Amen.