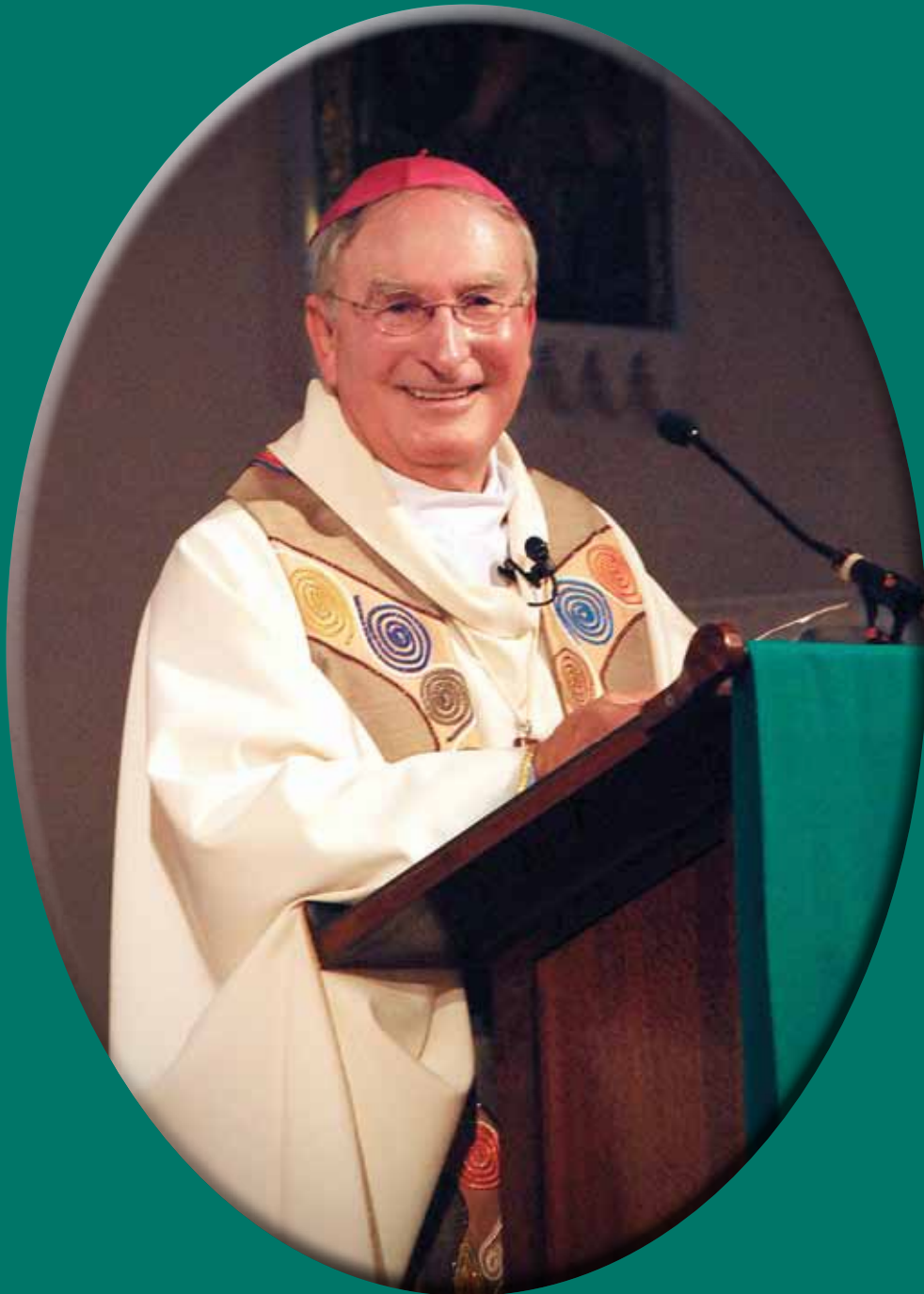


SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2011

**EUCHARIST
IN CELEBRATION OF
THE MINISTRY OF
BISHOP WILLIAM MORRIS, DD**



**Bishop of the Diocese of Toowoomba
10th February, 1993 – 2nd May, 2011**

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

“The Mass of Thanksgiving for Bishop William Morris on Sunday 28th August was one filled with love – his love for the people of the diocese, their love for him and their collective love centred on Jesus Christ.

“More than 1500 people crowded into St Patrick’s Cathedral, Toowoomba, and filled a marquee in the cathedral grounds where the Mass was telecast.

“People came from throughout the diocese. The sense of affection, admiration, gratitude and support for Bishop Morris was evident.”

These words of Peter Bugden, Editor of *The Catholic Leader*, capture well the atmosphere of this grace filled celebration.

Because many who were present at the Mass – and many who could not be present – requested a special coverage “with lots of photos” in the next edition of our diocesan publication *Horizons of Toowoomba Diocese*, the *Horizons* Editorial Committee decided to print this special commemorative edition. For those who were present, it aims to serve as a small reminder. For those who were unable to be present, I hope it will give a glimpse into that memorable day and allow you to experience a little of its atmosphere and gather a little of its grace.

I particularly wish to thank Chris Fogarty and Ingrid Moore for taking such striking photographs that ‘speak for themselves’. With the words of the Liturgy, the commentators and the songs, they require little elaboration apart from an occasional caption. Thanks also to Gerard Saide and Tracey Flint who sent some photographs. The photograph on the front cover was taken by Chris Fogarty.

In a special way I would also like to thank: Bishop Brian Heenan of Rockhampton for permission to print his homily; Bishop James Foley of Cairns for his Reflection on the event; Bishop Brian Finnigan our Apostolic Administrator, for his gentle presence and constant support; Peter Bugden for his article; Mary Schwartz, Co-ordinator of the Liturgy Office for the text of the Liturgy; the members of the *Horizons* Editorial Committee – and of course, Bishop Bill, for all he has done for, and given to this diocese over the past 18 years. Bishop Bill, we *have* come to know the Shepherd better because of you.

Sr Eileen March.



Banner, beautifully worked in cross stitch, depicting Bishop Bill’s crest and motto.

“Today is filled with both sadness and joy, and many other emotions; but most of all it is infused with hope, because as Bishop Bill’s motto says ‘Christ is My Hope’”
Celia Warr, Welcome/Introduction.

INTRODUCTION

“HOUSEKEEPING” AND INITIAL GREETING: *Fr Peter Dorfield*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS:

Philip Dreise

Good morning everyone.

I would like to invite you to take a moment to centre yourselves to consider the surroundings you find yourself in and the purpose of our gathering.

Acknowledging traditional custodians is a way of expressing cultural respect when speaking on the land of another group. It is recognition that that particular group has cared for this part of Australia over countless generations, and by making such acknowledgement it also fulfills cultural protocol and respect to that particular language group.

In furtherance to this, a message stick, acknowledging the message Bishop Bill carried as he travelled the diocese, will accompany the message of Jesus, the Book of the Gospels, as it is processed in.

As we come together on this sacred land, let us recognise that we meet on country for which the members and elders of the Gaibal and Jarowair peoples and their forebears have been traditional owners and custodians for thousands of years.



WELCOME/INTRODUCTION: *Celia Warr*

Thank you for gathering today to celebrate the ministry of Bishop Morris over the last eighteen years.

We welcome civil dignitaries who have joined us.

We also welcome and acknowledge the presence here today of local leaders of other denominations and members of their worshipping communities. We are delighted that you can be with us. We understand that, instead of receiving Holy Communion, you have indicated a choice to receive a blessing by forming the cross with your arms. We thank you for your sensitivity in this matter.

The Christian community has gathered to celebrate our life in Christ for two thousand years. Sometimes we have gathered in joy, other times we have gathered in sorrow. As always, we gather to give thanks to God who gifted us with his Son and with Bishop Bill who proclaimed Christ’s message joyfully to us for eighteen years.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



ENTRANCE SONG:

Gather Us In (M. Haugen)

“Here in this place, new light is streaming,
Now is the darkness vanished away;
See, in this space, our fears and our dreaming,
Brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
Gather us in, the blind and the lame;

...
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;
Gather us in, the proud and the strong;

...

*Here we will take the wine and the water;
Here we will take the bread of new birth;
Here you will call your sons and your daughters,*

*Call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion;
Give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.*

...

*Gather us in, and hold us for ever;
Gather us in, and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together;
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.”*



SIGN OF THE CROSS AND GREETING:



PROCESSION OF SYMBOLS:

Reader: John Briffa

The life of our Diocese is rich and varied. The many people, places and endeavours we experience as a diocese unite us as one People of God.

We bring forth symbols that speak of our oneness.

The diocesan quilt is already in place. The tapestries sewn together depict the distance and diversity of the communities that make up the Toowoomba Diocese. Within its borders, this quilt holds the solidarity of all who share this diocese.

We bring forth...

the diocesan candle – the Light of Christ – present at all our diocesan gatherings. The flame of faith burns within us as we return to our communities to continue the mission of Jesus.

Wheat – symbol of our agricultural diocese and depicted on the Diocesan Crest.

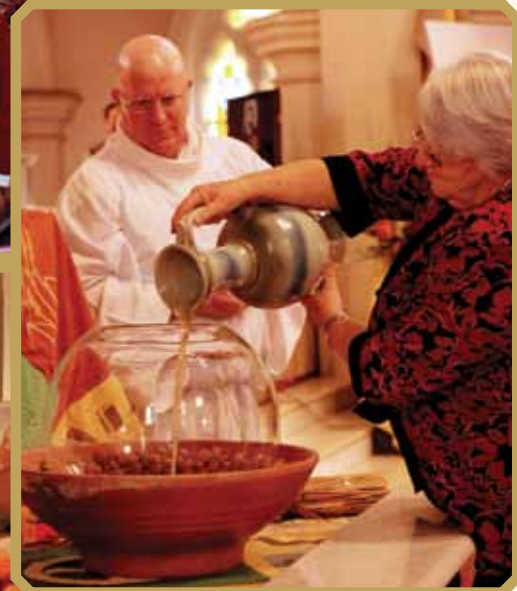
Water from the Dogwood – since the flooding of the Dogwood Creek at Miles disrupted the first ever gathering in 1998, the Dogwood has been held affectionately in the hearts of the diocese.

I invite parish representatives to now bring forward water from their communities and pour it into the Dogwood water as we again gather as one people of God.

Water from the Dogwood Creek was carried by Noreen Bourne and then parish representatives mingled water from their own communities with that of the Dogwood.



The diocesan candle was carried by Christine Gwyder and the wheat by Brian Taylor.



Reader: Sandra Neale

In 1993, William Morris was ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Toowoomba. His Episcopacy has gifted this diocese with new life and vision.

We bring forth symbols that speak of Bishop Bill's ministry with the diocese.

Wool – from the expanses of the diocese and the fabric of Bishop Bill's mitre.



The wool was carried by Rod Spearing.



Wood from the Gidgee tree – Bishop Bill’s pastoral staff and pectoral cross are fashioned from the western gidgee.

Olive Oil – grown and crushed at Inglewood. Bishop Bill was anointed with the oil of Christ at his Episcopal Ordination, a sign of his leading, teaching and sanctifying office of Christ.

Ecumenical Agreement – Bishop Bill fully supported the Ecumenical movement in the Toowoomba Diocese. Two agreements have been signed with the Anglican Church during Bishop Bill’s episcopacy. We bring forward the agreement signed in 2009 by Archbishop John Bathersby, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall and Bishop William Morris.

Mary of the Southern Cross – our Diocesan Patron. When it was discovered that the Diocese had no formal patron, Bishop Bill, after listening to the people of the Diocese, petitioned the Holy Father to recognize Mary under the title of the Southern Cross as Diocesan patron and to establish the feast on the 1st of September, the anniversary of the ordination of the first Bishop of the diocese. The petition was granted in 1998 and this symbol unifies the diocese.

The wood from the Gidgee tree was carried by Ian Gall; the olive oil by Daph Pullen; the Ecumenical Agreement by Rev Doug Frith and Lyn Cash, and leaflets of Mary of the Southern Cross were carried by Trisha Gall and Donaugh Shirley.



GLORIA:
Glory to God
(Mass of St. Francis)

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us pray:

Lord God of power and might,
nothing is good which is against your will,
and all is of value which comes from your hand.
Place in our hearts a desire to please you
and fill our minds with insight into love,
so that every thought may grow in wisdom
and all our efforts may be filled with your peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.





Mary Allen did an amazing job of signing throughout the entire Mass, and the choir was inspiring under the direction of Anne Thomas, with Vickey Cocozza playing the organ.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING:

Reader: Graham Healy

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah (20:7-9)

You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed.

All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me.

Whenever I speak, I must cry out,

violence and outrage is my message; the word of the LORD has brought me derision and reproach all the day.

I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more.

But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

The word of the Lord.



RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Cantor: Diana Carrigan

Psalm 63

Ref: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

1. O God, my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.
2. So I gaze on you in your dwelling to see your strength and glory.
For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise.
3. So I will bless you all my life, in your name I lift my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet, my mouth shall praise you with joy.
4. For you have been my help; in your shadow I rejoice.
My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.



SECOND READING:

Reader: Maureen Andrews mfi

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (12:1-2)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL PROCESSION: (AS CELTIC ALLELUIA IS SUNG)

Message Stick:



Carried in front of Book of Gospels and presented to Bishop Bill.



The two little girls who presented the Message Stick to Bishop Morris are Thani and Georgia Dreise wearing traditional Torres Strait Island - "Mary" dresses. The adults with them are Maree Tombs and Raelene Ward.

**Book of the Gospels:
Carried in relay form by Deans of diocese:
Fr John Quinlan, Fr Michael McClure and
Fr Peter Dorfield.**



GOSPEL:

Reader: Bishop William Morris

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (16:21-27)

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you."

He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?

For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."

The Gospel of the Lord.



HOMILY:

*Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton.*

It is an honour to be gathered with you, the people of the Toowoomba Diocese, to say 'thank you' to the Bishop of Toowoomba, William Morris. I am grateful to the Bishop Administrator, Brian Finnigan for his welcome and I am delighted to be with Bishop James Foley and many visitors to honour you, the people of this Diocese and Bishop Bill.

In sharing these thoughts by way of a homily, I have to remember that this is a time for thanks, acknowledging all that Bishop Morris has done, and who is in our midst today, possessing his characteristic strong and courageous spirit.

I will simply follow the readings set down for this weekend, which could hardly have been better selected had we tried.

Perhaps the words of Jeremiah, Bishop Bill could have made his own, as he joined in prayer with the Lord he loves so much.

Could he have said "Lord you have seduced me". You gave me to understand that you would stand by me when eighteen years ago, you asked me to be bishop. I knew it would be challenging, but I didn't know I'd have to retire so soon! I always knew you were the strong one, but I didn't know you would overpower me!

Well, I am sure the Lord has answered, "that's not how it is". "I cannot be held responsible for all the things that happen in my Church, but I want you to know that I

have been delighted with your years as a priest in Brisbane and now these productive years as a Pastor in this great Diocese of Toowoomba".

So, the next thoughts of Jeremiah have never been yours, I am sure Bill, you have never been a laughing stock, or the butt of people's insults or derision. You have been loved and respected by your people for the best efforts you have made and that is why we have gathered to say 'Thank You'



And then there is the last sentence of that reading, which I believe is, the story of your heart. If you ever had the feeling - is this struggle worthwhile, the fire that was burning in your heart could not be contained and you continued your pastoral commitment with courage.

For you have been my help, in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. My soul clings to you, your right hand holds me fast.

St Paul asks the people of Rome to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1) When he speaks of 'living bodies', he is surely meaning the whole person. He sometimes speaks of your 'spiritual selves', at other times, 'your bodies', but to me he is speaking of the total being that we are, body and spirit not separated, but embracing the whole person we are, reaching out to life in all its fullness, with all its demands, with its challenges – the complete person fully alive. This to me is the ideal for us all, this is what I see Bishop Bill embracing throughout his ministry as priest and bishop in your midst.

In St Paul's words 'this total embracing of life' is the only way to discover the will of God and to know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do. And St Paul adds 'do not model yourself on the world around you' (Romans 12:2), - sometimes we need prophets who can present our true Christian values clearly, and I believe Bishop Bill has been one such prophet.

Jesus summed up his invitation by saying 'unless (like me) you take up your cross daily, you cannot be my disciple'. He went on to say 'anyone who loses his life for my sake will save it' (Matt 16:25). He concludes (in my words) 'what will a person exchange for his integrity, for what he holds sacred'?



So this morning we draw on our Scriptures to try to understand the complexities of God's ways, to recognise that God only asks us to respond to God's call with integrity and honesty. Obviously, our thoughts are on Bishop Bill this day, and we honour him as one who has sought to follow his God honestly and to minister faithfully to the people entrusted to his care.

When Jesus was giving his life for his people, he knew that not all understood what he was saying. Bishop Bill has not always been understood by all of the people of his diocese.

But, here is the most important point I wish to make. As Jesus accepted the Father's will and went ahead, entering into the suffering, he went on to the great moment of the Resurrection which is the foundation of our life and faith. He endured the pain to offer us reconciliation and redemption and the hope of sharing his risen life.

So, I make the comparison with Bishop Bill who is so like Jesus in his acceptance of the situation. He has not been spared the pain, but is not diminished in his love for the Church. We heard him say this on several occasions. That to me is a powerful acceptance of the will of God, even though it is not what he might have desired.

The other powerful point is that like Jesus, Bishop Bill has provided us with a tremendous witness to the future. He has proclaimed his truth, he has stood by what is important to him as your Shepherd, and we gather to offer him heartfelt thanks this day. He has remained truly faithful to his motto "Christ is My Hope" We all hope that Bishop Bill will find fulfilment in new ministries into the future, for he has so much to offer. Like the Risen Lord, whom he has served so well, he will bring the hope of the Resurrection even more strongly into his life and the life of those with whom he will minister.

I have to recall that this is a homily, it is within the context of thanksgiving for the many blessings that Bishop Bill has shared with you over the years, and to give thanks for the gift that Bill has been to all.

I would ask some indulgence to give thanks for the friendship I have had with Bishop Bill for the last 40 years – years as a fellow priest in Brisbane and coming on eighteen years as a bishop in the Australian Bishops Conference. My confreres here today, Bishop James Foley and Bishop Brian Finnigan, would share with me that you have been gift as a most welcome member of the Bishops Conference, your generous and effective work in guiding the Commissions like Administration, Industrial Affairs, Justice and Peace and in a most significant way, Professional Standards. Your optimistic and faith filled approach to all you do in your ministry, your love for the Church has always been evident, but at no time more than in recent years when you have suffered so much. You have not walked away, you have not become angry, you have done your best to be a true pastor to all in the Diocese, including those who have criticised you. You have offered your ministry generously, not only to your own Diocese but throughout the Church in Australia.

For your brother bishops you have been a witness to pastoral commitment. All may not have agreed with you all of the time, but that is what true leaders are about. They make their stand and make it clearly, but then have the humility to accept outcomes, whatever they may be.

So, in this celebration of thanksgiving, we thank God for the Church we love, we thank God for this opportunity to say 'thank you' to Bishop Bill Morris, as we celebrate the gift he has been as a witness to pastoral love and care. We ask the blessing of inner peace for Bishop Bill as he journeys into the future, guided always by the Spirit of Jesus.



PROFESSION OF FAITH:

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:

Reader: Jessica Ryan

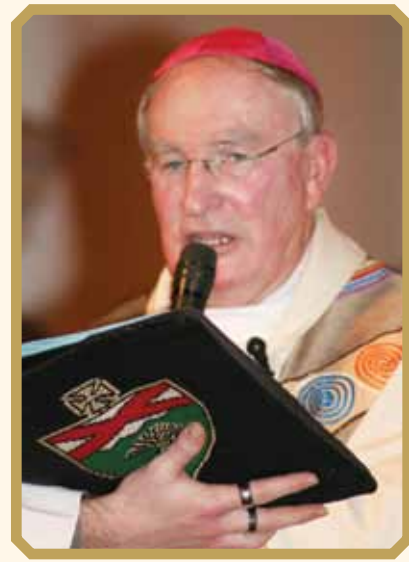
Bishop: My friends, it is our faith that God knows us, cares for us, acts on our behalf and hears our prayers. We now make our needs known to our loving God who calls us together as one community in Christ.

Reader:

1. We pray for the church: for Pope Benedict; for Bishop William Morris; for all bishops, priests and deacons; religious men and women; for all who minister in the many roles and organizations that continue the mission of Christ. Lord hear us.
2. We pray for the leaders of nations: for the just use of power and authority; for those countries ravaged by war, famine and poverty; for the creation of human communities where people live in peace. Lord hear us.
3. We pray for this gathered community with its many blessings: for an end to all that divides us; for hearts open to the stranger; for peace in our hearts and our homes. Lord hear us.
4. For families who are suffering: for those who are living with financial problems, unemployment, illness, addiction; for couples who have fallen out of love; for parents whose children are unhappy; for children who do not feel safe or cherished at home. Lord hear us.
5. We pray for all who are sick: those who are living with serious illness; for those who are frail, isolated, lonely or in pain. Lord hear us.
6. We remember those who have died... and their loved ones who mourn them. Lord hear us.

Bishop: Gentle and loving God, hear the prayers of your people and grant them out of your love for us. This we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of Gifts:



The gifts were carried by Barry Sheehan, Meryl Tracey, Ann Romeo and Lillian Ashcroft.



Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life...

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink...



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:

...

You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
and all you have created rightly gives you praise,
for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
by the power and working of the Holy Spirit,
you give life to all things and make them holy,
and you never cease to gather a people to yourself,
so that from the rising of the sun to its setting
a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you:
by the same Spirit graciously make holy
these gifts we have brought to you for consecration,
that they may become the Body and + Blood of
your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command
we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed he himself took
bread, and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took
the chalice, and, giving you thanks, he said the
blessing, and gave the chalice to his disciples,
saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU,
AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL
COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU
AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

...



From left: Bishop Brian Heenan, Fr Peter Schultz, Bishop William Morris,
Bishop Brian Finnigan, and Bishop James Foley.



... grant that we, who are nourished
by the Body and Blood of your Son
and filled with his Holy Spirit,
may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us
an eternal offering to you,
so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect,
especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs,
with St. Mary MacKillop,
all the patrons of all the particular churches of the diocese,
and with all the Saints,
on whose constant intercession in your presence
we rely for unflinching help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord,
advance the peace and salvation of all the world.
Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity
your pilgrim Church on earth,
with your servant Benedict our Pope and me your unworthy servant
the Order of Bishops, all the clergy,
and the entire people you have gained for your own...

...Through him,
and with him,
and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen:

*(sung - Mass of St.
Francis)*



COMMUNION RITE:

Sign of Peace:



Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the
sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the
supper of the Lamb.
...



Communion Procession and Songs:



One Bread, One Body (J. Foley)

“ One bread, one body, one Lord of all
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.

...

”



The Lord is My Shepherd (B. Boniwell)

“ The Lord is my Shepherd and I want to follow
Wherever he leads me, wherever he goes,
Over the mountains, the waters and byways,
Valleys and highways, he’s waiting for me.

Ref: I want to go to meet him there,
To lay myself down in his love...

And while on the journey to where we are going
He promised to be there to help us along.
And over the mountains we’ll walk on together,
To know all the wonders he’s given to me. ”

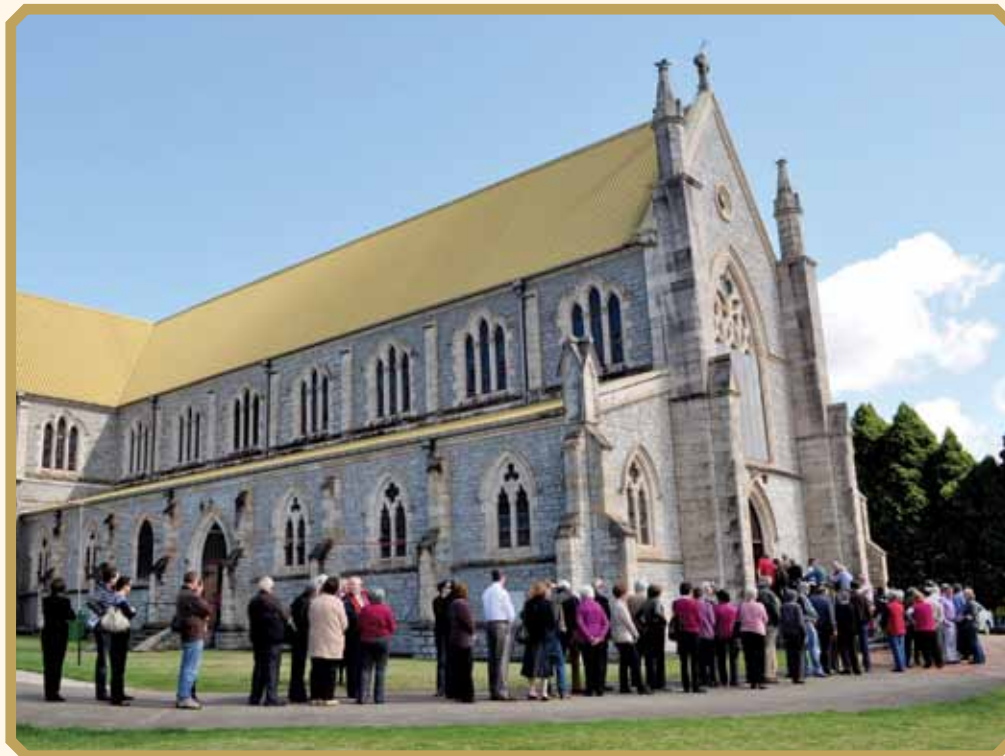
The Fullness of God (F. Andersen)

“ Deep in Christ I pray you know the power he can give!
May your hidden self grow strong! And may you live –
strong in faith and built on love, until you know
how high and long, how wise and deep, the fullness of God.

May the God of Jesus Christ, the Father we serve
fill your mind that you may see, deep in your heart,
what hope his call now holds for you: his promise true
to fill your heart with power to live the fullness of God.

...

”



Prayer After Communion:

Let us pray

Lord,
you renew us at your table with the
bread of life.
May this food strengthen us in love
and help us to serve you in each other.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the
Lord.

Amen.

People from the marquee ‘joining the line’
to receive Communion.

PHOTO STORY:

The Photo Story can be seen on the diocesan website.
Go to: www.twb.catholic.org.au
click on 'News', then on 'Video'.





At the end of the Photo Story the congregation, priests and bishops spontaneously rose to give Bishop Bill a heartfelt standing ovation.

***PRESENTATION OF PARISH BOOKS AND INVITATION TO SING BLESSING:
Mark Copland***



Bishop Bill, it is difficult to express our feelings at this time. Since May you have received thousands of communications from our Diocese, around Australia and the world. I would invite John and Deirdre to present you with some books in which we have collected messages for you from throughout our Diocese. They are messages of sadness – messages of anger, messages with prayers and messages of hope. Most of all they are messages of gratitude for the way that our Diocese has flourished under eighteen years of your leadership.

John Elich and Deirdre Gardner presented Bishop Bill with books of messages.



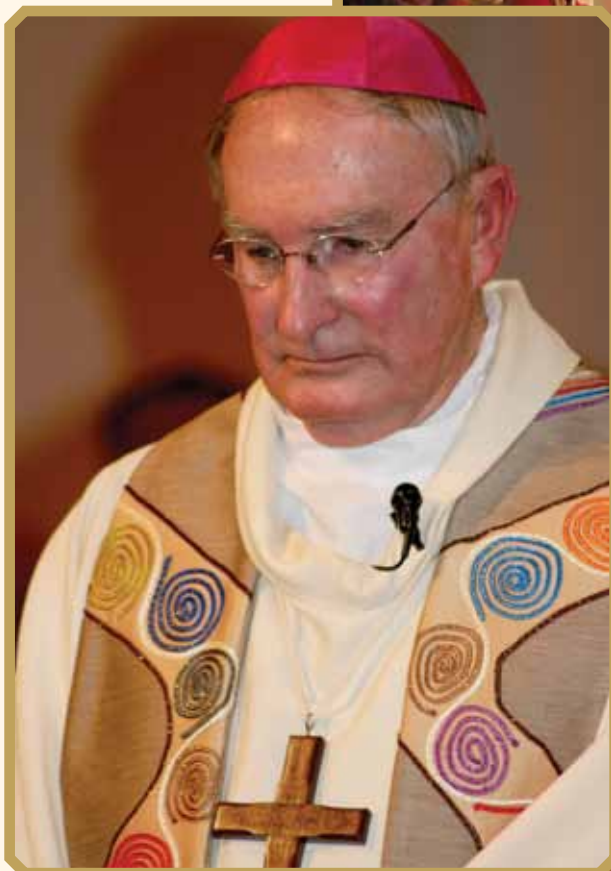
SUNG BLESSING:

My Peace

(C Willcock)

“ May peace be upon you forever,
May love be within your heart,
May the Spirit keep you safe
all your days. ”

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BISHOP BILL:

Thank you very much. As you would appreciate I am a bit emotional.

I am OK when people aren't nice to me!

It has been an absolute privilege to have been able to live and celebrate my life with you and among you for the last 18 years. When I came I said I hoped that we would grow together and help each other to get to know the Shepherd a little better. I can thank Him that you have helped me to do just that and I hope in some small way I have helped you to get to know the Shepherd a little better too.

You have gifted me with your love, friendship, support. You have challenged me, you have taught me... If we are going to live Jesus' death and resurrection then we need to do more than just dream dreams – we must live them; and we found that we must live them by grace and by action for social justice; we found that we must live them by evangelizing life and culture. We found that we must live those dreams by respecting and honouring our faith traditions - and I am honoured by the presence of ministers and my brothers and sisters from other denominations this morning and it's been a great privilege to walk with them through the 18 years...

We dream dreams and we make them become a reality by promoting and celebrating life-giving liturgy and we have a great example of a life-giving liturgy today. I thank those who prepared the liturgy and I thank those who prepared today and all the liturgies throughout the diocese that happened through the years...

Words cannot capture the depth of my gratitude...

I thank my brother priests, those with me today, those who can not be here because of their work... I thank them very much for their friendship, for their love, for their support. I, as Bishop could not wish for a better group of brothers. Thank you...

To my brother bishops here present today, thank you for your support, for your friendship. To Bishop Brian Finnigan for his hospitality, for his welcome, for his support of me and his openness for allowing me to minister as a priest within the diocese; thank you Brian. Your support, your friendship over the years has been wonderful.

Brian [Bishop Brian Heenan] thank you for your words today. It is indeed a privilege to have you here.

To my sister Jan... and all my friends, thank you for your undying love and support.

I had an extraordinary staff whose focus was concern for their sisters and brothers in the local church, and they did so well in all their various ministries throughout the diocese. Thank you for the work that you did, thank you for your ongoing work, thank you for the witness you have been to the Gospel message.

To Josephine my secretary, thank you for putting up with me; for your help and support, for the support that you give the priests of the diocese and also your brothers and sisters in the diocese and for the thousand other things you do that no one knows: thank you.

I could go on - but I won't! Just let me say, you are all gift to me.

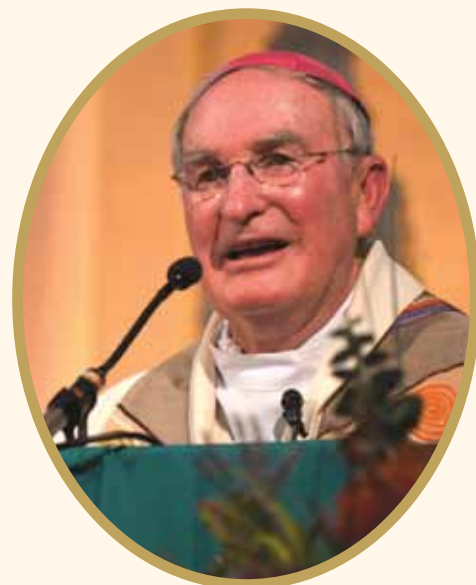
An old priest said to me in my first parish 40 years ago, that you leave your heart in your first parish; your teeth in the second, and your feet in the third. I can honestly say that I have left my heart everywhere I've been - so my heart is with you. I am still a part of the diocese – you can't get rid of me that easily!

...I'll finish off with a story. This young man, in America, was studying indigenous languages... Look at my stole! My Indigenous brothers and sisters gave me that this morning. Thank you!

Anyway, this young man, he was studying the languages and he went to a small town where there was a Reservation not far outside. In the centre of the town there was a fountain and each day one of the native Indian ladies would come in and she would weave those wonderful colourful garments during the day and she would sit among the people there. She couldn't speak the language, but she always had a smile and always greeted everyone. When she left, she always said the same thing. One afternoon the young student heard her and he asked his friend "Did you hear what she said?" His friend replied, "No... She always says the same thing every day, but we can't understand her. The student said, "This is what she is saying: 'Thank you for allowing me to be part of your life. I am a better person for having been with you.'"

Thank you.

Sitting in the second row from the front is, from left: Josephine, the Bishop's secretary; Rita, a close family friend; and Jan, the Bishop's sister.



CONCLUDING RITE:

Blessing:

May peace be upon you forever.
May love be within your hearts.
May the Spirit keep you safe all your days...

May Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dismissal:

Go in the peace of Christ.



"Thanks everybody. You are my family, you are my life, you are my love. Thank you."



Recessional Song: 'Anthem' (Tom Conroy)



John McAuliffe was the Cross Bearer, and Erin Egan and Ben Schauble were the Servers.



31 August 2011

We were more graced and deeply blessed than any of us could have expected, taking part in the Mass of Thanks for Bishop Bill Morris's ministry at St Patrick's Cathedral, Toowoomba, last Sunday.

There was neither bitterness nor recrimination. Rather there was good humour and loving tears quietly shed.

When Bill himself began to speak and to thank, he was momentarily overcome. He then uttered unprepared words, which are so characteristic of him: "I don't get upset like this – when people are so not nice to me!"

Bill has been consistently so throughout this tragedy in which there are no winners.

The reasons, the causes and the motivations for what has occurred may be known only unto God, Who alone may judge.

Consistently and officially it has been stated that neither Bill's own integrity nor his pastoral effectiveness are questioned. The fruits – the proof - of this were palpably evident in Sunday's celebration.

Now, after almost two decades attending episcopal testimonials and funerals, I have never witnessed so simple yet profound an out-pouring of appreciation and love. As one of the other bishops there observed afterwards: The best way to go may be to get sacked!

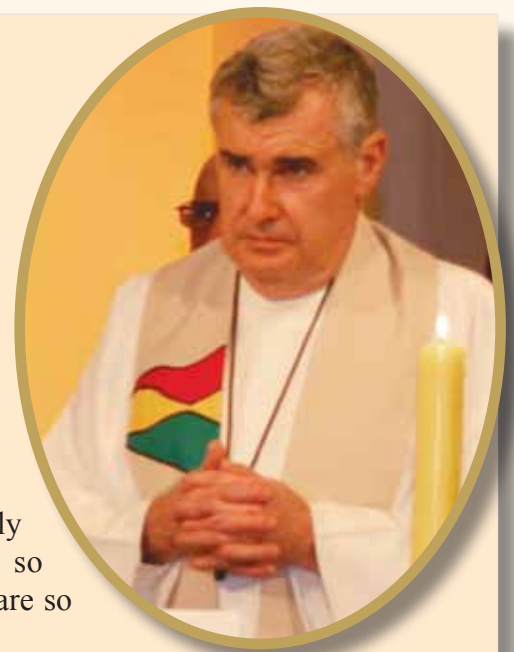
Bishops have to attend all sorts of civic and religious events – from Deb Balls to Papal Ceremonies. So you develop some sort of sixth sense in assessing the real worth of events.

Never have I been more struck than by the sincerity and depth of Faith at this recent Mass of Thanksgiving. The solid no-nonsense Catholic Faith of the people of the Toowoomba Diocese was un-self-consciously and un-pretentiously on display.

Distributing Communion to a congregation of a 1,500 which took 25 minutes, gave a privileged perspective: entire family groupings; well and warmly dressed people; farmers with strong working hands; some with obvious disabilities. Though there were some faces showing that rich cultural diversity now so striking among Catholic Mass goers, in Toowoomba, faces and names of Irish origins still predominate.

For all of us graced to participate in this Mass of Thanksgiving, it was as powerfully as ever that simultaneous experience of Death and Resurrection, of degradation and glorification, which in the tradition of the Gospel of John are either sides of Christ's Saving Event, which is made present again in every Eucharist.

+James Foley
BISHOP OF CAIRNS





...and he stayed until the last person had left the Cathedral grounds...