

Act 2 Bible College Official Opening Mass – Excerpt from the Homily by Archbishop Hickey.

1st December, 2005

I would like to congratulate your leaders on this very bold initiative of a “Bible College”, a school of formation, based very much on Holy Scripture, and for calling it “Acts 2”

We’ve just heard from Acts 2 (the second reading) how the early Christians lived with an intense awareness of the Holy Spirit in their midst. They could already see the power of the Holy Spirit abound, and extraordinary gifts spread in the community. So they lived together and they shared everything. They had enormous trust in God and lived a different way of life that penetrated the pagan Roman & Jewish communities where they lived. There was something happening then, a revolution if you like. A revolution of peace and love that shook society. It was the work of the Holy Spirit through followers of Jesus.

Today we look for similar revolutions to occur in our society. I am always pleased to be in the company of the Disciples of Jesus, here, at your Summer Schools, and on other occasions, because you do believe in miracles. You are not daunted by the oppression of secular society that does so much damage. You know that the Spirit is with you and therefore you have no fear of the forces that would try and crush the knowledge and love of Christ. We need some of those miracles now.....

Your college, I think, is part of this revolution of changing society. Your college is about personal formation according to the mind of Christ. Your college is about introducing people to the depths of the Word of God, so that that power will grip us and change us.....

Psalm 63; “My God, my God, for you I long. For you my soul is thirsting. Like a dry, weary land without water”. This was a Psalm sung in the Temple. The temple of Solomon really, and “The Ark of the Covenant” was there – Holy of Holy, the great Majesty of God was with them and the psalmist was obviously spending an all night vigil in the temple – praising God – trusting God and thirsting for God to enter his life, comparing himself to the land beyond Kalgoorlie there – the dry weary land without water.

Some of our deserts look like that at times until the water comes and what seems to be dry and lifeless springs to new life. It is a beautiful meditation on human beings and their thirst for God and the great love for God that the people of Israel had. Psalm 63 expresses not only the psalmist and the chosen people of Gods love for the presence of God in their lives, but also ours too and we sense that thirst – that thirst for God.

[Students] will be formed by all that beautiful imagery and sentiment of the Old Testament to praise and worship the one true God. And then they will see its fulfilment in the New Testament – where God comes among us in the person of His Son, Jesus – who asked us to call God, who is already so intimate to the people in the Old Testament, our Father – giving us His Father as Our Father, coming so close to us. And then, as we heard twice in the readings today – He sends us His Holy Spirit to change us – to make us different people and to give us all that is necessary to change the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So I am really very pleased that this College is here in Perth and that already it is doing great work; and I am sure that the Holy Spirit is using this College to change the face of the earth. Remember there are so many things to change out there – the individual, but also society. The Holy Spirit has shown miracles can happen in the past. The Holy Spirit will work through this College so that you will be witnesses to greater miracles yet.....

God Bless

