



**Pete's Homily (Matthew 9:14-17)**

## **OPENING OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH OHARIU**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**2033 St Francis of Assisi Parish Ohariu will celebrate 10 years of its opening as One Church.**

**We are at a moment in our History where we are given the opportunity to create a church community for the now and for our future.**

**Some of us may not be here in 2033 as we will be busy attending a wedding feast in heaven.**

**But the crowd of young people who are present here today, at this opening, probably will be.**

**We have the chance together to create a church community where our young people in 5 years, 10 years, 25 years will be the young and mature adult leaders and parishioners of this Parish.**

**What more of an incentive do we require than this to unite as One Church and be the face of the living Gospel for the now and our future.**

**So what is happening here? The answer lies in this morning's gospel: New wine is being poured into new skins.**

**When wine is new, it is in a state of fermentation. In the process of fermentation sugars are converted to ethyl alcohol. The crushed grapes bubble and expand as the fermentation gases are released. A fresh pliable wineskin can absorb such expansion and slowly age with the wine.**

**If you put the new wine into an old wineskin while it is still fermenting, it will burst the old wineskin and the wine will be ruined. The old wineskin is no longer pliable. It is fixed and brittle.**

**To his friends in Rome St Paul said, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds". "Let this same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Philippians)**

**In today's Gospel, Jesus' words reinforces St Paul's words ...**

**You cannot put new ideas into old mind-sets. You cannot get new results with old behaviours.**

**So how do we become the new wine in new wineskins, as we begin our journey together as One Worshipping Community here in Ohariu?**

**As we settle into becoming one community, we must discern what must happen for the new wine to flow into new wineskins. And we are asked to do this as the liturgical year leads us into Easter and the mystery of our dying and rising.**

**Discernment is about going to that place within us, where our deepest desires align with God's desire – and we listen!**

**A place where we sift through the things that hold us back and get in the way. The place where we discover the things that will lead us closer to divine love.**

**Good discernment will reveal new directions and priorities. We come to see that what previously dominated our lives loses its power over us.**

**When we discern in this way, we are allowing the new wine to flow into new wineskins. This is how we become One People, looking after one another and respecting one another. In this way we attract new people to come and see where we gather and join us and stay with us.**

**It's not an easy path and nothing in the Gospels suggests it is.**

**This calls for a willingness to confront assumptions and judgements that may be past their used-by date. Our faith tradition is constantly on the move.**

**Each one of us comes with our own unique stories of family, relationships, friendships, community and career, trust and betrayal, love and loss. We come shaped by a culture and its conventions, trends, and assumptions.**

**But each of us also comes with a deep desire to find goodness, truth and beauty.**

**Pope Francis constantly calls us as church to remain engaged and open with flexible borders, where messiness and chaos are embraced, where messiness and chaos are welcomed.**

**As a Gospel community,**

- **We must seek common ground and show mutual respect and compassion.**
- **A community without rigidity where differences are embraced.**
- **A community where outreach is our core ministry rather than a smug preoccupation with ourselves**
- **A community where we authentically connect with people marginalised by circumstance, prejudice or loss of opportunity.**
- **A community which enables us to be a church which comforts and champions those who struggle to keep life together.**

**Let's shape our minds and hearts to be a Church for all people, one that constantly asks whether it is fit for purpose.**

**Flexible, adaptive, attractive to the young and inquisitive, a light in the darkness for those who seek and search for something more.**

**Let's continue to be a church where ministries abound, let's continue to call new people to ministries and enable their baptismal calling to be that new wine to flow into new wine skins.**

**This is the foundation for a truly pastoral practice in our Church!**

**This is the road map of Jesus, this is the road map of Francis of Assisi whose name we embrace for our Parish.**

**We are on our way....**

