

Homily from the Bicentenary Mass to celebrate the presence of the Dominican Sisters in Cabra.

Today is a wonderful day of celebration as we gather to acknowledge the contribution and ministry of the Dominican Sisters to this area of Dublin for the last 200 years. Today launches a year of celebrations and it is appropriate that we begin here around the Altar giving thanks to God for all that has been; for all that is, and indeed all that will be. We are mindful especially today of the dedicated and generous Dominican Sisters who in the words of Longfellow have left behind them 'footprints on the sands of time', and those footprints give to us



200 years later courage and hope as we navigate the present, and as we look to the future.

I'm conscious that we have with us today different arms of the Dominican Family. I want to say to the pupils of St Catherine's, Casa Caterina and to the pupils of Holy Family be very proud of your schools and all who contribute to your education today. St Dominic, St Catherine and all the Saints of the Dominican Family were people who in their day became aware of God and lived their lives in imitation of Jesus. They

were kind, gentle, humble, and generous. You are all called to be the same.

To those from St Dominic's here in such big numbers I want to likewise encourage you also to be the hands, heart, and voice of Jesus in the world of today. The motto of your school is 'Veritas', Truth, and your task is to find that truth in your years of education and to discover that Jesus is the truth that truly sets us free. St Paul asks us today to live our lives with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, to literally become another Christ. St Irenaeus all the way back in the 2nd Century said that God's glory was that we be fully alive. That I suppose is the true goal of all Dominican inspired education.

To our VIP's here today, the Dominican Sisters; thank you sincerely for the gift of your presence; for your



dedication, and the dedication and fortitude of all those who went before you. When Pope Francis entered Croke Park last year during his visit to Ireland he was slightly delayed and he arrived as the song 'Anthem' by Leonard Cowen was just beginning. It turned out to be a perfect entrance song for this Successor of St Peter. As he passed through the crowds we heard 'don't dwell on what is passed away, or what is yet to be'. Pope Francis knows that the Church will thrive today only if it lives in the present, if it rings the bells that still can ring, and is ever faithful to the inspirations of the Carpenter's son from Nazareth. The song goes on by stating that the light shines through the cracks of life, the cracks that are there for a reason. Jesus came not for the perfect, but for those who were broken. It is only

when we let God be God that we truly become aware of God's light and not merely our own.

200 years ago women filled with the light and the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and under the inspiration of St Dominic arrived here from Clontarf, the place where I'm from. They came here apparently to escape the unpleasant odours of Clontarf, but I'll forgive them that particular judgement this once!! Since then Cabra and the Dominican Family have been inseparable. Today we look back with fondness and thanksgiving, and also forward with hope and optimism. Over the last two Centuries the beautiful perfume of God's love has been experienced in Cabra largely because of the Dominican Sisters and long may that continue. So on this special day let us give thanks for all that has been as we look ahead to all that will be. May Mary continue to guide us as we all continue to follow in the footprints of those luminous visionaries who went before us. May we all feel the support of their prayer and that of all the Saints of the Dominican Family. Amen.

Fr Michael O'Grady
PP Church of the Most Precious Blood,
Cabra West, Dublin