

As people who are trying to follow Jesus – or at least trying to do what He wants us to do by being here – we are all at different places in our faith journey, and that’s a good thing. Being here, at Mass, **used** to be the primary expression of discipleship but today there are many others. For example, the person who wakes in the morning and reads the Gospel of the day, seeking to listen to what Jesus says to them, or the person who, out of selflessness, cares for their loved one. The question today though, is not simply **where we are at**, but whether we are willing to **take the next step** – because if I’ve said it once, I’ve said it ten times: there’s nothing static about a healthy faith life.

Some among us are just beginning – perhaps quietly, cautiously working out they belong. Some are returning to a faith they once knew. Others have been coming to Mass for years, steady in their commitment, but perhaps doing the same thing over and over again. Some are beginning to seek more: growing beyond Sunday by investing in a personal relationship with Jesus. Some are ready, or perhaps being nudged, to serve, while others are unsure how, or even hesitant to begin. Wherever we find ourselves, the truth is the same: God always invites us one step further. There is always a next step in our faith journey - however small – of deeper trust, greater surrender, and more generous love and service. And into this moment, Jesus speaks: **“Trust in God still, and trust in me... [because] you will perform even greater works [than me].”** In other words: take that step by saying yes.

In the early Church, we see what **'the next step'** looked like in practice. As the community grew, the twelve Apostles realised that **the next step** wasn't simply for them to do more. Instead, they

called others into service and leadership - people “*of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom*” - and entrusted them with **real responsibility** and authority. The Church **grew** because the mission – to make new followers of Jesus – **expanded** instead of **narrowing** around a few people in existing positions of leadership.

That same movement is happening here in our parish by intentionally growing structures of service and leadership. Right now, out of the 1,100-odd people who celebrate Mass each weekend, we have 323 registered volunteers – which is 29% of the worshipping population. As we look outward, beyond the walls of our churches, however, we’ll need we’ll need 70% of people serving in ministry, because our mission is not to those who come to Mass – I presuppose that you’re already trying to follow Jesus by being here – but to the 130,000 people who live within the geographical boundaries of our parish!

Our leadership structures are also growing to support this movement, with each **Pastoral Leader** charged with forming their own leadership team to exercise **real responsibility** and authority in service of our Mission. **This vision** is about each person discerning their part in the life and mission of our Parish. By taking the next steps as individuals and as a parish, we open ourselves to the opportunities God places before us to respond to real needs and suffering around us in our communities.

This month in our Parish, Archdiocese, and in the whole of Queensland, we’re being invited to be particularly conscious of the reality of **domestic and family violence**. This problem is more

present in our country than many of us realise with 14 women and 5 children losing their lives in the first three months of this year alone.

***The problem raises an important question:*** if someone came to us seeking protection, shelter, or a sense of community, would we know how to respond? Would they feel safe to speak? Would we be ready to help? In Matthew's Gospel chapter 25, Jesus says, "Whatever you did to the least of these, you did to me." This is not a vague ideal, but a call to perform the same, or even greater, works than Jesus.

So perhaps one of the ***next steps*** is to become a place of greater safety, awareness, and support for those experiencing domestic and family violence. While not all of us will be called to direct involvement in this kind of service, some will. All of us can begin with prayer, with awareness, and with a willingness to respond.

So today, I invite you to ask and pray about one simple question: ***what is my next step?*** In the context of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, what is my next step, ***but also***, what is the next step in my faith journey to which God is calling me? It might be a step in your personal faith. It might be a step into community. It might be a step into service. Or it might be a step toward responding to the needs of someone who is suffering. Whatever that step is, Jesus' invitation is the same: ***"Trust in God still, and trust in me."***