

MASS CELEBRATED BY ARCHBISHOP DENIS HART
FOR THE FUNERAL OF FATHER WILLIAM JORDAN
AT SAINT BRENDAN'S CHURCH, FLEMINGTON,
ON TUESDAY, 13TH AUGUST 2013 AT 1.30 P.M.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"I am the Good Shepherd, I know my sheep and mine know me."

Today with his brother, Bernard, his sister, Rosemary, so many family members, priests and friends from a wide range in society we come to bid farewell and pray for the repose of the soul of William Anthony Jordan; priest, pastor and musician, who passed away at Melbourne Private Hospital on Thursday last after a short and aggressive illness.

Aged 78 and in the 53rd year of his priesthood, Bill was universally respected for his pastoral gifts, his care of migrants, his love of music, his openness to people, his wisdom and care for them. Melbourne has lost a great priest and pastor whose shining example remains with us in his memory. We pray for him and remember him with love, while supporting his family and close friends in prayer.

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

HOMILY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we come to bid farewell to one of the truest and most sincere shepherds who have ever worked in this Archdiocese. Father Bill Jordan combined in his many activities the real gifts of a pastor's heart and of the love and service of people without limit and without reserve. He was equally at home on international committees of musical or theological bent, as with the Italian and Coptic migrants, the callers from the street, the couples whom he prepared for marriage, those whom he buried and remembered with love. He is a great example of the true pastoral heart which is at the essence of the Catholic priesthood; "I know my sheep and they know me."

Bill was universally known as Father Bill here in Flemington and this knowledge and esteem had come with him through each of his parishes.

William Anthony Jordan was born on 31st August 1935 and after education by the Sisters of Saint Joseph at West Brunswick, the Good Samaritans in Hamilton, he attended Saint Bernard's C.B.C. and finally Saint Kevin's in Toorak, before going to Werribee in 1954. In 1957 he transferred to Propaganda College Rome, where he was ordained by Cardinal Gregory Peter Agagianian in the chapel on 21st December 1960, subsequently obtaining a Licence in Theology at the Urban University in 1961 and a Doctorate in Sacred Music at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in 1967.

Bill's capacity for dedicated research and attention to detail were qualities little known, but which followed him throughout his life.

On return to Melbourne he began immediately to work in the Italian apostolate with Dr Percy Jones at Sacred Heart, Carlton, and then in 1969 at South Caulfield, until he came to West Melbourne for fourteen years in 1971 prior to his appointment here as Pastor on 26th January 1985, with the addition of Kensington, being pastor of both parishes for his final eleven years before his appointment as Pastor Emeritus in 2011.

Bill always sought to encourage those in the parishes where he lived. His community of young adults formed in Caulfield South existed for many years. He was renowned for his readiness to assist the Italian community in marriages, funerals and memo Masses. His pastoral outreach to those who came to him and his almost total inability to say no to anyone who was in need, even if it impacted upon him financially. Bill had a great gift of treating everyone with respect and the breadth of his work showed this.

In music he was the Assistant Director of the Cathedral choir for a time, a member and then chair of the Music Committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, editing two of its publications, a member of the Advisory Committee of the International Commission.

His legendary ability with detail meant that when we were organising both the Eucharistic Congress in 1973 and the Papal Visit in 1986 I would fly in and brief the media people about what would happen at a particular ceremony and Bill would then go back in great length and with great care to make sure that they knew exactly what was happening.

The same capacity for detail came with the editing of the Catholic Worship Book and his involvement in the Australian Hymn Book. Bill was patient, painstaking and thorough and you could be quite sure that if Bill had done a job it was done properly. The same thing occurred with his work caring for people as Defender of the Bond in the Regional Tribunal.

Bill combined his love of liturgy and music, in which we shared on so many occasions, including our travelling overseas to I.C.E.L. meetings, with an encyclopaedic knowledge of history, of travel, of culture, of people.

People esteemed Bill so much because everyone was treated with respect, welcomed and cared for. Bill was patient, honest and sincere, never looking for any kudos for himself. Members of the Italian community in West Melbourne, Flemington, Kensington, and far beyond knew of his legendary care, patience and goodness. The participation in the festas of saints was a further illumination of his ability to reach out into the culture of people, to embrace it, to uplift it and combine it with a modern liturgical vision, providing the very best of the renewal which flowed from the Second Vatican Council.

I consider it a great privilege to have worked with him on many occasions and in so many projects, which brought the renewed liturgy of the Church to enrich people's lives.

His skill as an editor of hymnals and books, his work even to the present on the second Catholic Book of Worship, is testimony to the fact that his days, even after retirement, were filled with the celebration of many Masses, Sacraments, counselling and care for people, so much so that he became quite unwell two or three weeks ago with a lung infection, which was later to bring about his death.

On his jubilee Bill spoke with esteem of his long association with families, youth groups, musical confreres, friends from many Christian churches, Italian, Vietnamese and East Timorese friends, together with the Coptic community and Fathers Francis Fahim and Matta Ayoub, whom he welcomed so strongly into Saint Brendan's and Holy Rosary.

Bill also was a collaborative priest, with his pastoral associates and the parish and school staffs, where he sought to create a place where 'we can be a welcoming community that looks after one another in moments of joy or sorrow on our way to the heavenly kingdom'. Bill's own humble words of those who worked with him: "They have strengthened my Catholic faith as much as I have tried to nourish theirs in word and Sacrament, the source of holiness in a secular world."

Bill always held together the beauty of music, the goodness of people, the gifts received and shared, which are the essence of our faith community. Today we will go forth remembering him with esteem, knowing that he knew us, we knew him, as he led us to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for us his sheep. May Father Bill rest in peace.

+ Denis J. Hart,
ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE.