

**HOMILY GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF  
SR CANDIDA DE ANGELIS SJGS  
ST FIDELIS' CHURCH, MORELAND. AUGUST 5 2007**

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord !**

This cry of joy of Mary is in our hearts today. It is in the heart of Sr. Candida as she gives thanks for 50 yrs of religious life as a Pastorelle Sister, as she gives thanks for 70 yrs of living her baptismal call to holiness (if she doesn't mind me saying publicly how young she is !)

50 yrs- half a century: hard to imagine that Sr. Candida has been building up the kingdom 10 yrs before I was even born. That makes her very holy- and me very humble.

It is a time for a Jubilee- a celebration and giving thanks to God.

This afternoon we especially welcome Bishop O'Connell, a great friend to the Pastorelle sisters for many years, in this, his own year Golden Jubilee year of priestly ordination.

Sr. Candida has spent most of her religious life ministering in a foreign land from her birth- 44 yrs here, for which we are all very grateful.

Most of her life spent away from her family- leaving her homeland at 26, like the apostles, she everything behind in order to be with Christ and to serve their brothers and sisters (cf Vita Consecrata).

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord !**

Mary gave thanks to the Lord for the great wonders He did for her-the song of joy we heard in the Gospel. 'my **soul** glorifies the Lord'., from the very depths of her being she glorifies God.

I know that today Sr. Candida makes that thanks her own. These readings were her own choices so that she may give thanks for her 50 years of faithfully lived religious life.

She gives praise to God through her religious life well lived;

For her formation began in a wonderful Catholic family; in her town and parish; in a new congregation at that time; in the strength of her community life; in her giving and receiving in pastoral ministry; in her prayer and contemplation- through all these things- her soul glorifies the Lord.

God has worked in all these ways and through all these people.

God has been faithful to Sr. Candida, and she has been very faithful to God.

Sr. Candida gives thanks to God. We too join her as we give thanks to the Lord for the wonders that God has worked through her, through her ministry of Jesus Good Shepherd.

Most of you will know Sr. Candida better than I do- some of you were taught by her at the kindergarten in Carlton when she first arrived in Australia in 1963, the year of the death of Archbishop Mannix.

Some of you have known her from her work with families and parishes in Melbourne and Adelaide, and some of you have known and supported the wonderful work of the Pastorelle Sisters since their arrival in Melbourne in 1955. Their work is legendary in these Northern suburbs of Melbourne and a big part of the story of post-war migration in Australia.

Sr. Candida taught in the Kindergarten until 1972, helping not only children, but also their families establish life in a new country. She worked in pastoral ministry with the Italians in Moonee Ponds, Coburg and Flemington.- being a bridge between the English and Italian speaking communities.

For 16 yrs she taught Italian on Saturday mornings- and now continues teaching Italian with this slow learning Australian parish priest.

In 1979 she worked with Fr. Visentin at the Italian Catholic Resource Centre.

She opened the community and worked in the parish of Payneham in Adelaide with Fr. Allan Winter in 1983, returning to Melbourne in 1986.

Since then she has worked in parish ministry in East Reservoir, Mill Park and here at Moreland.

Her gifts of Italian culture within Australia has enabled her to be a bridge to many, many people of all ages and cultures. She has been a bridge builder in her wonderful parish ministry which we have had the pleasure to have here at Moreland for the past 5 years.

In a few moments Sister Candida will renew her vows- she will promise to be faithful to the Founder's charism in communion with her sisters. She seeks to carry on the charism of Blessed James Alberione who founded the Pastorelle sisters in 1938, Sr. Candida was one year old. He saw the need for sisters to help minister in parishes and other forms of apostolic life, a need which is most necessary to this day.

To have known the founder is a very wonderful gift- to Sr. Candida, to the Pastorelles and to us.

Often Sr. Candida will say- 'Fr founder would say this.....' or 'Fr founder told us.....', it is a wonderful gift to us to have part of the living tradition of the congregation.

Sr. Candida brings the charism of the founder alive and makes it present to us through her wonderful ministry. A ministry that has been such a part her work in parishes. A ministry that has been with children, families, young people, older people, Italians and Australians.

A ministry that is most necessary now – working in parishes, to collaborate so well with priests. To show how well the religious and priestly vocations can complement each other for the work of shepherding souls to God.

This is very necessary work, work that we pray that many young women and men will take up as today we begin National Vocations Awareness week. It is the wonderful

example of religious like Sr. Candida that shows how fulfilling and joyful a religious vocation is.

Fr Alberione gave the sisters the title 'Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd'. The Good Shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep- certainly what Sr. Candida has done for 50 years- giving herself totally for the flock to build up the Kingdom in true collaboration with priests and lay people.

Sr. Candida shows us the strong witness of a faithful religious life well lived – and a fulfilling vocation. She is truly inspiring to others, the sight of a happy and holy religious giving witness to the joy of self giving for the kingdom.

Pope John Paul II says that this witness shows us the Kingdom is already active in the world. (cf Vita Consecrata)

A little kingdom builder moves around the streets of Coburg here each week.

Her consecrated life is a gift to the Church, to each one of us here, and to many, many people over 50 years. Sister will renew her consecration and offer herself to God forever as she did 50 yrs ago. To be faithful forever! Not something that people today find easy. To be faithful forever. Sister answers in love and full freedom to continue to be faithful forever.

She will again promise to live her Rule of life, and embody the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, which she has lived for 50 years in faithfulness to God. Poverty, chastity and obedience: a visible and living sign of what is to come and a sign that Christ is enough and Christ is everything in this life. Living in imitation of Jesus the Good shepherd who was poor, chaste and obedient.

In Sister's renewal of Vows, she will ask the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd. Mary, the perfect disciple who heard the Lord's call and responded in joy as we heard in the Gospel, the beautiful prayer of the Magnificat: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord !

Today I am sure Sr. Candida can make that prayer her own, as we all can as we give thanks with her for 50 faithful years of service. Suor Candida, tanti auguri; and Ad multos annos ! Sister Candida, Thank you and God bless you always.

Fr. David Cartwright,  
Parish priest