

**Holy Mass of Christian Burial for the Repose of the Soul of the Reverend David Roy Scott Thursday 12 November 2015, St Paul the Apostle Church, Winston Hills. Homily by Very Rev Peter G Williams, Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Parramatta.**

Australia was at war in 1941 when David Scott, about 15 years of age met another teenager Eric Burton as they made their way across Hyde Park for a meeting with the relatively new Archbishop of Sydney, Norman Gilroy (later Cardinal) to seek admission into the junior seminary at Springwood. Dave's elder brother John had already enlisted with the Royal Australian Air force, but his younger brother believed that he needed to enlist in another 'force' that would ultimately lead to ordination and life as a priest. The years at Springwood and Manly both during the war and in the period from 1945 to his ordination in 1950 would have had its deprivations, not only those imposed by the seminary authorities, but also because Australia as a whole faced hardship because of the war and the early years of post-war reconstruction. As the writer of the Book of Wisdom so pertinently says: "God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with him." But the young seminarian remained committed and was diligent in his studies as well as excelling on the sports field. After ordination his pastoral appointments at Lakemba, Haberfield, Lithgow, Dulwich Hill and Strathfield provided him with a broad experience of the diversity of Catholic life during the 1950's and early 1960's. The country was

rebuilding from the war, and migration from Europe was beginning to change the face of Australia. Such was his experience that he returned for a period to St Patrick's College Manly where he was Director of Students for two years. The suburbs were beginning to explode in Sydney and Cardinal Gilroy sensed the urgency of being on the ground to provide parishes and schools as the Catholic population spread. It was in 1970 that Fr Dave was appointed founding pastor of the new parish of Winston Hills here in Western Sydney. Not only was Sydney and Australia changing, but the Church was going through a fundamental reform and renewal following the Second Vatican Council. There was a surge of energy and optimism as clergy, religious and laity grappled with this new way of being Church, and there would have ultimately been mistakes as well as triumphs along the way given the frailty of human beings. It is hard for those of us formed after the Second Vatican Council to imagine the challenge this posed for priests like Fr Dave who had been trained and prepared as priests for a very different sort of Church. In a sense their whole *modus operandi* required re-imagining, and given the very formal training and understanding of the Church that had been imbued in them whilst at seminary could have resulted in an existential crisis, priests like Dave Scott made the adjustments whilst at the same being confronted with the task of building a new parish and accommodating to changes in

liturgy, ecclesiology and his own self-understanding as a priest. Perhaps he might have taken solace from those words in the first letter to St John: "...but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is." Thanks to the prescience of Fr Roger Winn of North Parramatta, land had already been acquired in the new development of Winston Hills that would provide the foundation for the building in due course of a parochial school, church, convent and presbytery – all the necessary infrastructure for a Catholic parish. As my Presbyterian grandmother was wont to say: "The Catholics always get the best places on the top of the hill!" Dave was the consummate Parish Priest, caring for his community with a gentleness of spirit, teaching the faith, administering the sacraments, and at the same time a very capable administrator. His legacy in terms of buildings stand all around us today, but the more important legacy was the community of men, women and children whose spiritual home became and still is this place for forty years. His prudent management and financial acumen allowed him to be very generous in supporting other parts of the mission of the Church outside the parish. I remember in the 1990's when I had oversight at Parramatta Marist he called me one day to say that he wanted to make a sizable donation as he said "to the Brothers." He never forgot his own educational opportunities at both Randwick

and Springwood. He maintained and built on his relationships with his brother priests and like many of them succumbed to the addiction of golf on Mondays. Vacations and fraternal gatherings with Paul Cahill, Paul Ryan and his great friend Eric Burton provided comradeship and that necessary ingredient of human friendship without which any normal priest would simply perish or worse become dysfunctional. As a pioneer parish priest in the West of Sydney we can only applaud his dedication and abiding faith in the Church and its people. In the Gospel today Jesus uses the analogy of the wheat grain dying in order to yield a rich harvest. In his sacrifice of priestly service David Scott inspired and brought to birth with him the Catholic community of Winston Hills. When the Diocese of Parramatta came into being in 1986 Dave chose to stay with the new Diocese and continue his service as Winston Hills, and with great capacity served the new Diocese in a number of different roles. Those who labored with him over these years, the Sisters of the Holy Faith, the assistant clergy here, his parish team, his collaborators in the laity can testify better than me to his utter faithfulness to them. In retirement and prior to his debilitating stroke he continued to maintain an active interest in all aspects of the life of the Diocese of Parramatta. When in the care of Holy Family nursing home at Marayong he would always endeavor to attend the annual meeting of the Clergy Board of Management and join the other priests

for lunch. God's graciousness at least enabled him to see his beloved Rabbitohs win another premiership last year! Others have now come to this parish and many have also retired and left or like Fr Dave have gone to "another shore" but the basic task of this parish remains the same – for the people to know Jesus Christ and to make him known. The one thing that he would want of all of us would be to remain committed to the mission that is the possession of all the baptized. As for Fr Dave, I think we can be confident that he will hear the words of Our Lord as recorded in the Gospel of St Matthew: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."