

**Reflection for the Knights of the Southern Cross -
“Seek the Welfare of the City” (Jer 29:7)
By Fr Julian Belich**

I'd like to begin with a simple image.

Early one morning before Mass, I walked into the church and noticed the soft light of the sanctuary lamp glowing quietly near the tabernacle. It struck me how that little flame burns day and night, steady and sure. It doesn't make a sound or draw attention to itself, but it's always there—for whoever happens to come inside—reminding us that Christ is present.

That, in many ways, is what we're called to be in our communities: steady lights, quietly bearing Christ's presence wherever we are. Jeremiah's words come to mind: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you, and pray to the Lord on its behalf.” (Jer 29:7). Even the smallest light—a kind word, an honest action, a moment of compassion—contributes to the welfare of the city.

The Catechism reminds us that “Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God.” (CCC 2196), and it adds, “It is the duty of citizens to contribute to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom.” (CCC 2239). Our faith isn't confined to Sunday worship; it's meant to guide how we live, work, and serve alongside others every day.

Now, I'll admit something—I've always been more of a local person. My heart is in the small and the personal—the parish, the individual, the everyday conversations of life—rather than the big picture of politics or policy. Yet Scripture and the teaching of the Church remind us that those small, faithful acts matter. The mustard seed doesn't look like much, but as Jesus tells us, it becomes the greatest of trees. (cf. Matt 13:31–32) Jesus Himself never engaged in the politics of His time. He didn't set out to reform the Roman system or organise a social movement. Yet everything He did changed the world. Think of the poor widow offering her two small coins (Mark 12:41–44), the Good Samaritan stopping on the roadside (Luke 10:29–37), or the man born blind receiving sight (John 9). Each of these encounters took place on the smallest of scales—one person, one moment, one heart transformed—and yet they revealed the heart of God's Kingdom.

The Catechism says, “Society is essential to the fulfilment of the human vocation.” (CCC 1879) and “Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good.” (CCC 1903). Those lines remind us that faith always has a public dimension—it shapes how we see the world and how we help build it for the good of all. In our Catholic tradition there's an old tension, or rather a balance, between two callings. One is to educate and influence leaders who can guide society toward what is good and just. The other is to go to the margins, to lift those who struggle most. Both are essential. One places the lamp on the hill so the light can be seen widely; the other carries the same light through the streets, one home at a time.

That's where I see the mission of the Knights of the Southern Cross. You carry the light of faith into the everyday life of Australia—not through grand gestures or political manoeuvres, but through faithful presence, integrity, and service.

Jesus told His disciples: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant." (Matt 20:26). And the Catechism says charity is "the form of all the virtues." (CCC 1827). In other words, true greatness is servanthood. Real leadership begins with love. So perhaps our question today is not "How do we fix society?" but "Where is Christ asking me to show love today?" Where, in my family, parish, or community, can I quietly "seek the welfare of the city"?

Saint Mary MacKillop put it beautifully when she said, "Never see a need without doing something about it." Those simple, faithful actions are the seeds of renewal. When multiplied across a nation, they form the light that guides others home. So as we talk and reflect together, maybe we could each consider:

- Where do I feel called to bring the light of Christ this week?
- How can the Knights serve not only through planned projects, but through how we live and relate to others?
- What might it mean for our Order to be that steady sanctuary lamp—quietly burning for the good of our nation and our people?

And may that humble lamp, which glows day and night, remind us that Christ is always present—for whoever comes inside.