

PREACHING-some challenges!

John Newcombe was not only a great tennis player in time he proved to be a great tennis commentator. Years ago, I read a reflection that he wrote on the art of effective commentating and this is what he wrote, *“You don’t just repeat to your audience what is obvious before them. For example, if a player is consistently double faulting your task is to tell the audience from your knowledge and experience of the game as to why they are double faulting.”*

Immediately I thought that this principle is also behind the art of effective church preaching. The challenge I have to come to appreciate is to expand the scripture text in a way that the audience can effectively appreciate and then how it can be effectively applied to their life. This means getting the mixture right between knowing what shapes the scripture text and then some of the life challenges that the people listening to it are possibly experiencing. Like a good commentator to do this well takes a lot of preparation and nurturing the art of *economy of words*. This means not saying too much! Also like an effective commentator listening to feedback about how your words are coming across is invaluable.

Jesus of Nazareth spoke about being an effective disciple- preacher in these words; *“Every scribe instructed on the things of the kingdom of heaven brings out of their household things both new and old.”* (Matthew Ch. 13 verse 52) *Fr Martin R Maunsell*