

### Homily 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Lent Year C 2022

Why is it that when Jesus is angry, we find excuses for it? Do we do the same for someone we don't like or appreciate?

Let's take another look at anger. When we are passionate about injustice, of what people are doing to creation by slowly undermining the future of humanity, the hostilities in Ukraine: surely, we have every right to be truly angry?

When God looks at humanity and sees it destroying itself; abusing and misusing power by oppressing and maltreating the poor, gambling with people's lives to make unjust profits, would we not expect God to be hurting and angry at the harm we are doing to ourselves and refusing his healing love, mercy and forgiveness??

This is why Lent calls us to repentance and conversion!

In *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Henri Nouwen says we need a three-fold conversion 1) to move from being a bystander to being a participant; 2) from being a judge to being a repentant sinner; and 3) from speaking about love to actually letting ourselves be loved.

However merciful, loving and generous Jesus is to us (*already beyond reckoning*), whatever we might know or learn about Jesus, however profound, theological and spiritual, it is all for nothing if it does not help us live better lives in the example of Jesus. Mercy, kindness, compassion, reconciliation are all actions with and for others.

The Scrutinies for those entering fully into the Church at Easter call us all to acknowledge our failures and misdeeds and truly own them. Only then will it be difficult, if not impossible, to rush into judging others. What is more, we are much better able to appreciate the goodness and love in others when we own our own weaknesses and failings.

Lent calls us to love our neighbour but not to the extent that we do not let the love of others embrace, energise, heal and inspire our lives. Isn't it through others that God so often chooses to show his love for us? Why shun this enriching, nurturing and life-giving offering??

Facing down evil, Thomas Aquinas says this: *Evil has no real being. This doesn't mean that evil doesn't exist or isn't real but it only exists as a privation of the good. For example, deafness is a kind of evil that results in the deprivation of one's ability to hear. So evil is not so much a thing as much as the absence of a thing. It has no real being of its own because it must feed off the good like a parasite.* No wonder God is angry with evil, seeing it suck the goodness out of our lives – a goodness he has worked so hard to give us.

**Pope Francis** "*Lent invites us to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness.*"

**Henry Nouwen** "You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking."

"The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it"

"Our humanity comes to its fullest bloom in giving. We become beautiful people when we give whatever we can give: a smile, a handshake, a kiss, an embrace, a word of love, a present, a part of our life... all of our life."