

Homily 30th Sunday Year A 2023

The Christian Mission Statement: *“Love God and Love your neighbour”* are two sides of the same coin because you cannot do one without the other. Unlike the Pharisees question, our question is *“HOW?”*

Timothy Radcliffe OP offers us some useful tools on how to do this especially in terms of loving our neighbour:

Listening and conversation in the Spirit are central to the synodal process (*journeying together*). St. Benedict teaches us to seek a consensus in conversation and dialogue while St. Dominic loved to debate; St. Catherine of Siena asks us to delight in conversation and St. Ignatius of Loyola to learn the art of discernment. St. Philip Neri believed in the importance of laughter.

Conversation often needs an imaginative approach if we are to enter into the experience of another person. To be able to see with their eyes and hear with their ears. It is as if we wish to get inside their skin. This will help us understand better the words they are using? What pain or hope they might be carrying? What journey they are on. All this will lead to a better understanding, respect and love.

When the thorny issue of authority turns up, it is good to realise that authority is multiple and mutually enhancing. It need not be a competition as if the laity can only have more authority if the bishops have less. Authority comes from beauty, goodness and truth. Fir, without truth, beauty can be vacuous. Without goodness, beauty can deceive. Goodness without truth collapses into sentimentality. Truth without goodness leads to the Inquisition. A prophet must have a love of truth but also have compassion for those for whom that truth is eclipsed.

Being afraid often leads to a fear of losing control. But being led by the Spirit into all truth means letting go of the present, trusting that the Spirit will help us create new institutions, new forms of Christian living and new ministries. Like a good mother bird, *“The Holy Spirit sometimes kicks us out of the nest and bids us fly! We flap in panic, but fly we will! If we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit of truth, we shall doubtless argue. It will sometimes be painful. There will be truths we would rather not face. However, in the process, we shall be led a little deeper into the mystery of divine love and we shall know such joy that other people will be envious of us!*

Carlo Carretto (1910–1988), a Little Brother of Charles de Foucauld: Offers us his thoughts on the Church:

How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love you! You have made me suffer more than anyone, and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed, and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal, and yet you alone have made me understand your holiness. ... Countless times, I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face — and yet, every night, I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms! No, I cannot be free of you, for I am one with you, even if not completely you. Then too — where would I go? To build another church? But I could not build one without the same defects, for they are my defects.

If loving neighbour were easy, many would not even try, but the whole process will definitely lead us into a deeper, richer and more lifegiving experience of God: God’s love for us, our love for God!!

A little silver-haired lady calls her neighbour and says "please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get started."

Curious, her neighbour asks, *"What is it supposed to be when it's finished?"*

The little silver haired lady says, *"According to the picture on the box, it's a cockerel."*

Her neighbour decides to go over and help with the puzzle.

She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table.

He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, *"First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a cockerel."*

He takes her hand and says, *"Secondly, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then,"* he said with a long deep sigh..... **"Let's put all the Corn Flakes back in the box."**