

Reflection Tuesday Week 31 – 2023

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?

An answer can be found in Paul's letter to the Romans. Many gifts were given to us and enriched in baptism among which are *Prophecy*, the ability to *serve or minister*, to *teach* by example as well as instruct, and to affirm and encourage others. We are also asked to be charitable and support others less well-off. We are given authority but always as a means of service; to be merciful and show mercy. We are encouraged to do this selflessly and lovingly and most of all cheerfully. The qualities need to do all this well are *sincerity and avoiding* all that is evil. We do this out of a true love for others, as Paul says: *love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour*. Behind all this we are graced with the ability to *anticipate each other in showing respect*, knowing that we are *serving the Lord joyful in hope, persevering* in time of trial, and *praying regularly*. Paul encourages us to *look to the needs* of our brothers and sisters in Christ and to be generous in offering them *hospitality*.

In Paul's days Christians were suspected, hated and attacked, for all sorts of reasons but Paul urges them to "bless" their persecutors and not to curse them. Or as Jesus said if you only pay back your persecutors in kind you will just bring yourself down to their level. Blessing and praying for them is not impossible as it is often the only way to bring about lasting change!