

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday (C)

14<sup>th</sup> July 2019

'Love your neighbour'!

Dt 30: *the Word is very near to you for your observance.*

Ps 68: *Seek the Lord, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.*

Col 1: *all things were created through Him and for Him.*

Lk 10:25–37: The Good Samaritan

St Luke's Gospel contains so many of those beautiful and powerful parables of mercy. In the middle of Lent, we heard the parable of the Father's deep, life-changing forgiveness, commonly known as 'The Prodigal Son.' But there are others in Luke, no less powerful, such as today's parable, 'The Good Samaritan.' In this famous account, our Lord teaches us, by His very own example of stooping down to save mankind from his Fall into sin, what it means to be a true neighbour to another.

The whole of Our Lord's parable is constructed to answer the probing question, "Who is my neighbour?" Our Lord answers that question not only through showing how we should behave to others — how we should show the care for others, even in the most desperate of circumstances — but also showing that He Himself is that good neighbour; He Himself is the Good Samaritan, reaching down to us, and demanding that we love Him, our neighbour, God-with-

us. As so often, then, not only does Our Lord give us the example, but He also gives us the grace to help it happen. It is one thing for Him to say, "Look how this man behaved ... Go and do the same yourself," but it is another thing to say, "I know that you are weak, and your love can be half-hearted; here, let Me help you have the strength to do good."

And He does that by first helping *us* up, out of our sins, off the ground, and on to our feet. The fine details of the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' show us that indeed Jesus gives us the saving anointing and nourishment of the sacraments; He gives us a home, a place of sanctuary, in the Church, where we are cared for; and He gives us the promise of hope in a future life with Him, when He comes again. All these cause us to have such a great love for the One who chose to become our neighbour, Jesus Christ. We know that he has rescued us from our weakness and vulnerability; and given us the grace by which we can love Him. And when we love Him well, then it will follow that we will also love our fellow men and women well.

Jesus, then, having been our neighbour, and loving us

by His life, death & resurrection, and His gift of the Spirit; we then are in a position to be a neighbour to others. We draw on Christ Himself to be able to love our neighbour well. When we look at Christ, we see that He was unstinting in His care for us. He held nothing back, right to the giving of His life. And in the parable, too, we see that the Good Samaritan puts aside His own day, His own plans, and focusses entirely on the one in need.

We cannot say that we love God — God who came to our rescue — and not live it out with love of neighbour. They are a package; they are two sides of the same coin. It's perhaps all too easy to say, "And who is my neighbour?" But all around us there is the need to give our lives in the love and care of others. That's not always easy. Think of the two in the parable who found all sorts of excuses to 'walk on by,' to 'pass by on the other side.' Let's be reminded by Christ this morning (evening) that this is simply not an option — we cannot leave aside the love of neighbour, if we are professing a love of God.

Perhaps it is a timely moment to be reminded about

the corporal works of mercy — Our Lord's commandments from Mt 25: to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to welcome the stranger; to clothe the naked; to visit the sick; to visit the imprisoned; to bury the dead. There are opportunities each day to fulfil one or more of those charitable actions, and we should take them up with joy. Knowing that we are then fulfilling what we were made for: to love God, and love our neighbour. Our parish's support for the local FoodBank, and for the Broxbourne Winter Night Shelter, is a wonderful expression of this commitment, but in fact there are smaller and daily ways in which we should be exercising our love of neighbour.

Let's feel the care that Our Lord has shown us; let's see the love of His that lifted Him up on the Cross so as to lift us up from our sins ... and then with hearts full of grateful love, let's turn to our neighbour to share that love with which Jesus has filled us. We have been saved by the Lord; let's help save others, and make sure that their lives are touched by the love of God, given *to* us in Christ, and given *by* us in holy charity.