

'LOVE, DO GOOD, BLESS, PRAY, BE COMPASSIONATE'

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year C – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2019

### READING A BOOK

We can read a book at different speeds.

We might speed read.

We might look at the contents page of a non-fiction text and choose what chapters to read, or check out the index at the back.

We might read a novel that we can't put down.

We might begin reading a book, but we find it boring and put it away.

We might find a book with difficult language and concepts.

We might find a book that we decide, after a few lines or pages, that we wish to **read slowly and reflectively**.

And be in no hurry to finish.

Perhaps we take a few days or a week or two, to read now and again, maybe returning to the book a couple of times a day.

The book **becomes a companion**. We **journey with the reading**.

We might feel the need to put the book down and **reflect** on some passage in the book.

We **ponder** what the author is saying and how the author presents it.

We ponder whether the author intends

more than one meaning to a sentence or paragraph.

And a passage or word could **remind** us of something else in our lives and experience.

### LOVE

The Bible is God's Word.

The Holy Spirit will inspire us and sustain us,

challenge us and uplift us and draw us into the love of God.

When we come to last week's and this week's Gospel passages,

we are **invited to ponder what Jesus means, as presented in Luke's Gospel**.

We ponder the word - **Love**. What does it mean in this context?

We note the words that accompany the word **love**,

The words that journey with the word **love**.

There are three words in Greek in the New Testament for love.

When preparing a homily,

it is important to check in the Greek language to see which word is used.

Firstly, the loving word for friend. **Philia**

Secondly, the loving word for romantic love. **Eros**

Thirdly, the word for loving commitment to a neighbor,

a commitment to a neighbour that you would make sacrifices for.

The word **Agape**.

Throughout the gospel, we see Jesus loving. **Agape.**  
Jesus teaches directly about agape - love, and through parables, and living love.  
Living the love of God and neighbour.

Jesus does not tell us to *'pay back'* violence as in some cultures.  
Jesus does not tell us to seek revenge with another person.  
Jesus does not tell us to be spiteful to someone 'different'.  
Jesus does not tell us to be captive to *isms*  
like racism, sexism, consumerism, and clericalism.

Jesus approves and inspires and witnesses  
to the love of God and of our neighbour.  
Jesus reveals what it means to love God.  
Jesus reveals who is my neighbour.

### **Jesus reveals the freedom to love.**

To truly love God and neighbour freely and wholeheartedly.

### **GOSPEL OF LUKE 6:27-38**

Today's Gospel passage is very challenging,  
We journey with Jesus as we imagine the scene.  
We ponder how Jesus is inviting us to deepen our love for God and neighbour.

We ponder the four verbs place together:  
The action – **love – do good – bless – pray.**  
Verbs of action. Committed and active.  
We ask ourselves when we face challenges in life:

**HOW DO WE LOVE?**

**HOW DO WE DO GOOD?**

**HOW DO WE BLESS?**

**HOW DO WE PRAY?**

In understanding today's Gospel passage,  
it is important to understand the active sense implied.  
Not being passive. Not being negative.  
Not being a doormat for people to walk all over you.  
Not cynical. Not sarcastic. Not vindictive.

But free to love, even your enemy or opponent,  
bickering family member or argumentative fellow worker.  
Let us journey now with the Gospel:

***'But I say to you that listen,  
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,  
bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.***

***If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;  
and from anyone who takes away your coat***

*do not withhold even your shirt.  
Give to everyone who begs from you;  
and if anyone takes away your goods,  
do not ask for them again.*

*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

*'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?  
For even sinners love those who love them.  
If you do good to those who do good to you,  
what credit is that to you?  
For even sinners do the same.  
If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,  
what credit is that to you?  
Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

*But love your enemies, do good, and lend,  
expecting nothing in return.  
Your reward will be great,  
and you will be children of the Most High;  
for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.*

*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

*Do not judge, and you will not be judged;  
do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.  
Forgive, and you will be forgiven;  
give, and it will be given to you.  
A good measure, pressed down, shaken together,  
running over, will be put into your lap;  
for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'*

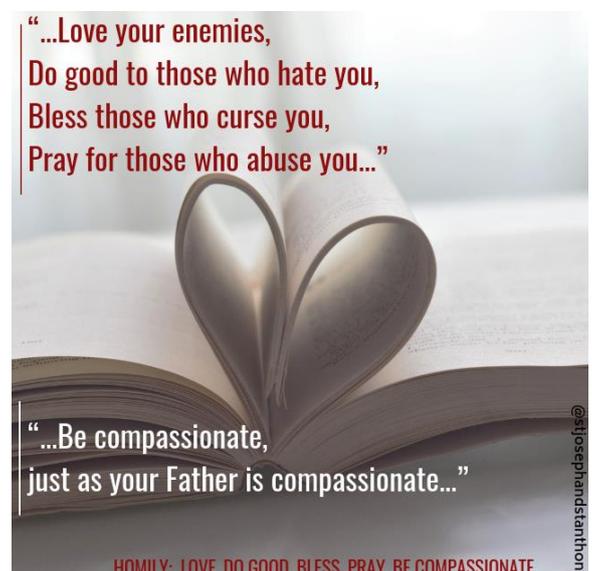
#### BE COMPASSIONATE (BE MERCIFUL)

Let us reflect on a fifth verb above.  
There are specific words for 'Mercy' and  
'Compassion'  
and there is a Greek word that can be translated by  
both.

The NRSV translates the phrase above as  
*'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.'*

The actual Greek word can also be translated as  
compassionate.

*'Be compassionate, just as your Father is  
compassionate.'*



Luke's Gospel explores a loving compassionate response in

- **Life and death** - Luke 7:13-15 Jesus giving life back to the only son of the widow at Nain.
- **Cultural and religious discrimination and religious bigotry** - Luke 10:33-35 Jesus telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, where the Samaritan lovingly cares for his cultural and religious 'enemy'.
- **Family and religious division** - Luke 15:20-24 Jesus telling the parable of Prodigal Son, the father and elder brother. Where the younger son squanders his family inheritance, disrespects his father, and deserts his religious faith, and later returns to his father who welcomes him back.

These are three examples of being compassionate and being merciful.

### MEETING IN ROME

Today concludes the Meeting of Presidents of Bishops Conferences and others in Rome on Church Sexual Abuse of Children. February 21-24.

On the first day, participants received [21 points from the Pope](#) of proposed changes.

[The Meeting – Protection of Minors in the Church Website](#)

At the end of the Sunday Mass today, Pope Francis will speak about the experience and what is to be implemented.

For example, some participants will remain during the week to work on a world-wide manual for the Catholic Church on how to handle sexual abuse claims, procedures and follow up. There will be a group examining a process to monitor how bishops in dioceses implement safeguarding procedures and pastorally support survivors.

Our parish social media will make available the Pope's message after it has been released in English.

We wait to see what will be put in place and how it will be enforced.

We pray for the survivors who were criminally abused and betrayed by church personnel.

May we learn from God's Word in the Gospel today.

Let us now pray our [prayer of the last few days](#).

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/022419.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook24022019>]