

## 'THE GOOD SAMARITAN' - HOMILY 10 JULY 2016

How do we break down the barrier?

In today's Gospel Jesus has begun the final journey up to Jerusalem. He is focussed. Yet he has time to give today's parable of the Good Samaritan.

When we are busy, when we are single-focussed, we can forget this lesson of Jesus.

Yet Jesus invites us in our busyness, in our work,  
In our narrow-mindedness, in our social lives,  
In our celebrations, in our holidays, in our savings,  
In our worship, IN OUR LOVE  
Not to forget our neighbour.

We do not take a holiday away from loving our neighbour.

It is not optional.

In all we do and say, we are called by God to love God and to love our neighbour.

We don't take a holiday, away from being human.

We all need rest, time to renew, time to refresh ourselves, time to unwind.

If we are fortunate enough to go on holidays locally or overseas,

We are still called to love the people we meet.

**BUT? WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?**

We can be generous to people who remind us of ourselves.

We are generous to people in our country who experience drought, or floods, or bushfires.

We are generous when we see in the media, the plight of people overseas having suffered famine or earthquake or tsunami.

Yet how do we love our neighbour in the human family when we don't understand them?

When we say they are different?

When we fear them?

Jesus by his suffering, death and resurrection, breaks down the barriers.

He died for ALL of us, not just the people we like,

Not just our friends, not just those of our own culture.

Jesus knew the strain of relationships between Jew and Samaritan.

Through the grace of God, the Samaritan breaks down the cultural and religious divide

Between Samaritan and Jew, to offer practical help and mercy to the last person you would

Expect him to help.

You would expect the priest to help, but he passed by on the other side.

You would expect the Levite to help, but he passed by on the other side.

You would expect the Samaritan to pass by, but he stopped to help, and offered follow-up support.

In early September the Catholic Church will canonise Mother Teresa.

How did she break down the barriers of fear, of isolation, of self-interest, of greed?

Here are some quotes attribute to her.

They may help us to reflect more.

*"Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing."*

*"Let us more and more insist on raising funds of love, of kindness, of understanding, of peace. Money will come if we seek first the Kingdom of God – the rest will be given."*

*"Good works are links that form a chain of love."*

*"It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."*

*"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."*

*"One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody."*

*"The success of loving is in the loving – it is not the result of loving."*

*"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of missing that drop."*

*"If we pray, we will believe;*

*If we believe, we will love;*

*If we love, we will serve."*

*"I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world."*

*"We are all pencils in the hand of God."*

I now invite all of us this week to reflect on examples in our lives where we reached out like the Good Samaritan?

What questions were in our minds?

What were the barriers to overcome?

Did we care what others might think about us?

What doubts were in our hearts, what fears?

How did loving overcome them?

How did we become a pencil in God's love letter?

How have those experiences helped us to pray, believe, love and serve more deeply each day?

This week the [Australian Catholic University Campus in Melbourne will be the venue for an international conference on the question of violence in our world, in secular society and in religion.](#)

May this powerful parable of the Good Samaritan be an inspiration for their discussion.

The parable of Jesus offers hope in overcoming -

Personal violence,

Interpersonal violence, and

Communal violence in our world.

The life of Mother Teresa shows us a way to loving.

We pray for the Conference.

We pray for peace in our world.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – 'The Good Samaritan' – 10 July 2016]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/071016.cfm>]