

Homily: 15th Sunday Cycle C: 2022: Deut 30: 10-14; Ps. 69; Col 1:15-20; Lk 10:25-37

“Embracing a Life of Christian Charity in a more profound way”

1. The parable of the Good Samaritan today gives us a model of Christian love.

Christian love is different than simply being nice or being a humanitarian or a philanthropist – which often involves telling other people when we do deeds of mercy and having them acknowledged publically (Jesus says, *if we tell others about our deeds of mercy then we give up our reward in Heaven for them – not great*). The key is our motivation: we Christians are not to love our neighbor simply to make ourselves feel good or to help them just on a human level, but the core reasons why we are called by God to help and love others is because they are made in the image of God and we want to imitate Jesus in His self-giving love.

2. To be a person of mercy or compassion is more than “feeling someone’s

pain,” for we never really can fully do that - contrary to what some politicians say - as every human person and situation is multi-layered and complicated. True mercy rather consists of doing deeds of love, in our will and actions - if the feelings of compassion are there that is a bonus since our feelings are very up and down because our human nature is wounded because of sin - but don’t ever let the lack of loving feelings toward a person prevent you from loving them in God. The old saying is “actions speak louder than words.” There are so many ways we are called to be like the Good Samaritan in the Gospel reading who represents God, e.g., *when a mother or father gets up in the middle of the night to care for a little baby; caring for an elderly parent; loving our spouse in good times and bad, in sickness and in health, in the beauty of youth and in the challenges as we get older; being patient with and offering prayer and spiritual sacrifices for someone who we really don’t like, or who has hurt us badly knowingly or unknowingly; listening to someone we don’t find very interesting; calling or visiting a lonely person, whether they are at home or in the hospital or nursing home; using our cell phone to call for help when we see someone broken down along the road, calling ppl back to the Catholic faith or encouraging ppl to study it, etc..* In big or small ways, we are called to do daily deeds of self-giving love for our neighbor,

especially when we don't feel like it on a human level! That is the true test of charity and whether or not we are growing in the likeness of Christ, i.e., holiness.

3. **It is only if we are rooted in the Lord that we can continue to love others - long term.** As I have mentioned before in homilies, St. Mother Teresa pointed out that she was only able to love other ppl, in her case in a very heroic way, because she spent at least two hours a day in prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and God filled up her soul with HIS LOVE to love the least among us. What a powerful witness of the necessity of a deep interior life of prayer! Not all of us can spend two or more hours in prayer each day like a religious sister, but all of us can pray more and work on our personal relationship Jesus leading to deeper union with the entire Blessed Trinity. **Christ's love is the inspiration for everything we do as a Church:** *our missionary activity: home and abroad, hospitals, nursing homes, community outreach, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, crisis pregnancy centers, other pro-life work, etc.* All this we do because we want to imitate our Heavenly Father's all encompassing love shown to us in a concrete way in the person of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As St. Mother Teresa also said, *"Simple acts of love and care keep the light of Christ burning in our world. Sometimes it is simply a kind word, a compliment, a smile, a thank you. Each work of love however big or small brings a person face to face with God."* True Christian love heals, liberates, and transforms our hearts, and one person at a time it brings souls to Christ who alone is our salvation. How we need this self-giving love today in world filled with ever increasing violence and hate! Let us be like **the Good Samaritan** making the time to help those in need, and be not like the OT priest or Levite in the parable - too busy to love the other! Instead in Jesus may we love others in season and out of season, which is the narrow path to Heaven, to His Kingdom - the life of which is based on self-giving love, in all its manifold and beautiful forms, to full completion in Jesus. God bless you.

Recommended Reading: Pope Benedict XVI. Encyclical Letter **On Christian Charity** (Deus Caritas Est). December 25, 2005. See:
www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben.