

Homily – Lk. 10: 25-37
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
10th July, 2022 - Sooeey

It was in 1981 that Dr. William Magee Jr. from Virginia with his wife Kathleen who was a nurse and a clinical social worker, traveled to the Philippines in order to offer medical treatment to children with cleft lips and other facial deformities. But what they found there in the Philippines was overwhelming. Kathleen would recall their experience with these words: "Everywhere we turned, people pushed their babies at us. They tugged at our sleeves with tears in their eyes and begged us to help their children".

But unfortunately, there were so many children with this deformity that hundreds had to be turned away. And the Magees couldn't remain blind to the pain of these little children, that as they were leaving, they made a promise, that they would return to help more of them.

Now, this caused Dr. Magee and his wife to found an organization called *Operation Smile*: a movement that sends volunteer doctors to perform reconstructive facial surgery for children worldwide. "It wasn't a strategic plan," said Magee. "It was just a matter of emotion and passion to make sure, that, children didn't have to live this way." And today, this international medical charity has credentialed medical volunteers from around 80 countries, dedicated to helping

improve the health and lives of children from more than 60 nations.

Now, Dr. Magee could have just ignored the cries of those children. But moved with compassion, he stopped to help them, he stopped to wipe the tears of those in pain. And he inspired his fellow surgeons to follow suit.

Well! The central theme of today's Gospel Reading is that we gain eternal life through loving God living in our neighbors, by becoming good neighbors. And this Gospel passage on the Good Samaritan is, undoubtedly the most straightforward of Christ's parables that doesn't call for a lot of discussion. Rather, it calls for action: "Go and do the same yourself" or "Go and do likewise".

What is most disturbing in Christ's story is not so much the attack made on an innocent man, but the fact that two people who should have helped, just passed by without even showing compassion for the wounded man. Probably, this indifference to the pain and sufferings of others is so wide spread today that the defiant cry of Cain could clearly be heard rising on all sides even now: "I'm not my brother's keeper".

Now, "Why did the priest and the Levite not stop when they saw the wounded man?" And the answer is very simple: "Because the first question that came to their mind was: what

will happen to me if I stop?”. Whereas the first question that came to the Samaritan’s mind was: “What will happen to the wounded man if I do not stop?”.

Philip Toynbee relates a strange and shocking incident that happened to him. He had gone to a meeting near Cambridge, and had parked his car in a pub car park. When he got back to the car, he found three police cars outside the pub, their blue lights winking on top of them.

He looked for the cause of the police presence and saw a wrecked motorbike against the wall. Then he saw a lot of blood on the road, and noticed a dented crash helmet lying some ten yards away. On enquiring what had happened, he was told that about half an hour previously, a young man on the bike had hit the side of a van and ricocheted into the corner of the porch. His body had just been taken away and the police were now busy taking photographs with flash bulbs in the rainy darkness.

Philip now went into the pub. And there inside, it would have been impossible to guess that anything unusual had happened. There was loud jukebox music and loud laughter and nobody was talking about the young man who had just been killed on the other side of the very wall.

Now, he asked himself the cause of this? Was it shock at what had happened? Or was it that they were putting on a

stiff upper lip? Or, were they just determined that nothing spoil their fun? He couldn't decide which of these had produced that astonishing appearance of total indifference, but looked as if it was the last reason more than the incident itself.

Well! People today are very cautious about getting involved. Getting involved is often a messy business. It disrupts your life. You never know the amount of trouble you are letting yourself in for, if you decide to answer a cry for help. It is much safer, and far easier, to close your heart and go quietly by on the other side of the road.

And the strong point in Christ's parable is that it involved a Samaritan helping a Jew. Jews those days hated the Samaritans. And yet, it is the most unlikely person who emerges as the hero. His reaction was instinctive, for, he couldn't find it in him to pass by a fellow human being who was wounded and crying out for help. He was immediately moved with compassion. And he stopped to help.

Well! At one time or other, we've all acted like the Priest and the Levite. We have definitely passed someone by who needed our help. Yes! We have refused to get involved. No doubt, in each case we could come up with highly plausible excuses. But when all is said and done, the real reason we did not help is, that we perhaps lacked concern for a fellow human being. We were simply preoccupied with ourselves.

Well, the parable of Christ is more relevant today than ever before. How many people lie wounded by the roadside of life today? Remember! Their wounds are not always visible. Many of today's deepest wounds are invisible. Yes, people can be wounded in spirit. We need to look around and see if there are such people in our own families, in our own communities or in our own neighbourhoods: may be a depressed man who has lost his wife, or a member of our community who seeks to be understood and cared for, or a person who has worked all his or her life and is now suddenly redundant...Yes! All waiting, lying quietly there, not having the courage to call out...waiting for the coming of a Good Samaritan. Can you and I be a Good Samaritan, a good neighbor to those wounded people we encounter in our day today lives?

God bless you all, **Amen.**