

Homily – 13th Sunday of the Year 26th June 2022

Sometimes people profess to being religious or God fearing when it suits them; you can get curious and even frightening combination of those who say they are Godly but at the same time want to inflict violence and suffering on those who don't share their faith.

In the Gospel today Jesus is journeying from Galilee towards Jerusalem. On the way he passes through Samaria, a land where the Samaritans live. As the Samaritans had animosity towards the Jews; when the Jewish pilgrims passed through their villages, they would close their doors and shutters; offering no food or hospitality to the Jewish travellers. This incensed some of the Jesus' followers...

The Jews then thought they had a good excuse for hating the Samaritans. Jesus wants to move away from excuses and recriminations for hating other people. The vicious spiral of violence that can paralyse a community and divide the inhabitants.

I was reading recently, in Glenlivet, up in the Highlands, just a few years after Culloden, when the Church of Scotland School master allowed the Catholic Children also to get their Religious Instruction in their own faith. Jesus teaches us today that deadlock and intransigence can only be resolved by a willingness to enter into working for the Kingdom of God.

Ten years ago in Belfast, the Queen and Martin McGuinness shook hands at Stormont. Something thought unthinkable 40 years ago.

A true disciple of Christ, is someone willing to take risks in order to change hearts and minds, stereotypes and fanatics to seek peace and dignity of all people that dwell on earth. We can be friends without sharing all things in common in terms of doctrine faith and tradition.

A month ago, The Archbishop and Moderation of the Church of Scotland signed a 'Declaration of Friendship' that recognised the legitimacy of both Christian Faith Traditions to co-exist in a diverse Scottish culture and way of life. A far cry from the General Assembly in 1920 that sought a motion to repatriate all Irish Catholics back to Ireland.

It is very easy to use the term 'freedom' in our political and social system. However, we know under even the Equality Laws and system of the Judicial

system, how one person's insistence on the freedom to do what they want can so easily enslave or intimidate the lives of others.

As St Paul says to the people of Galatia, "serve one another, rather, in works of love, since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command, 'Love your neighbour, as yourself'. If you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole community.

The Jesuit Superior in Edinburgh of the parish of the Sacred Heart Church said recently that they often get mail incorrectly spelt for The Scared Heart. He made the point that when we lack faith in God; there is a risk that we propagate a culture of 'Scared Hearts' rather than being inspired to the ways of the Sacred Heart. Who sought to sacrifice his life in the cause of many. Gentile, Samaritan, Jew, slave or free, women or man.

We all need to be careful to listen to what the Holy Spirit is teaching us and work towards a more loving and peaceful world, God Bless you ALL, AMEN

Canon Jeremy Bath