



Allocutio



Presentata Curia 25th April 2013

Allocutio: “As you would that others would do to you: Do likewise to them.”F

When God wanted to contact us he tried many ways. He used nature with its normal ways, calm moments and sudden surprises. He used prophets and events in life. But eventually he sent us a person, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. There is no better way to contact humans than through a personal encounter. Use e-mails if you want or text messages, real encounter with a human is best.

Our Lord gave us the golden rule: Just as you would like someone to treat you, you do likewise to others. So it might be worth reflecting: how would you like to be treated by others? What kind of welcome would you like to receive? What would you like others to think concerning you? What would you like them to say to you? What body language would you like to see coming from them?

Perhaps it is easier to identify what we would not like: aggression, loud or harsh sounds, an air of contempt or criticism or judgement or dismissal. But should you experience that try and bring it to Jesus in his passion and rejoice that you share something of it with him. Still, decide that that is not how you will treat others.

Mother Teresa identified loneliness as the worst disease in our modern world. She even asked us to watch out for it in our families because often it is in homes. How well the modern phenomenon of suicide alerts us to that. Behind it lies someone who has a deep sense of being unloved, of being of no value, of being utterly rubbish. The problem often is that this is not the case, it is simply that we do not think out to other people. That is what the Pope warned us priests about on Holy Thursday, not going out to other persons. Go out to the margins he told us. Not just to the physical margins but to those around us who may feel marginalised, to those even who hide how marginalised they feel.

To you officers I say that you should keep this in mind when a new member joins. Think back to your first meeting and how you found it initially strange and how you needed time to get adjusted, how you hadn't a clue how your first report sounded. What did you need then? Encouragement, friendship, sound advice, a calm voice that restored your confidence.

I remember when Archbishop McNamara came to Dublin first he came around the offices to visit us. I will never forget his approach to me. He made me feel as if I was the Archbishop, he showed real interest and was most affirming. It was like meeting an old friend. He showed a confidence in me that belied the fact that he hadn't a clue what I was really like. And that does not come without an effort. When I go into the offices each morning I may be sluggish or worried or down in my energy but I know I have to lift myself for others and try and show them appreciation and interest and make them feel that



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it was worth their while getting up. I am not saying that I succeed each day but human relationships don't just happen; work has to be done to help them grow.

Is there anything that can help us in all our contacts? Is there anything that can help us show a real respect and interest and care for others? How can we present the face of God to them who loves them as his children? One thought that might help is to remember that this is Christ in another form. This is Christ thirsting for love, for recognition, for understanding, for appreciation. This is Christ thirsting for a smile, for a comforting voice, for gestures of friendship. We need to be positive about every encounter and have confidence that it will go well. Perhaps you have had encounters that seem to go wrong, when you were rejected. But you will have won if you took the right approach. Because people can end up feeling a heel after they treated someone in a bad way who was good to them. So as St. Paul said do not be discouraged about your acts of charity.

Of course we humans are people who learn from what we experience so it will also help if we have experienced the blessing of friendship ourselves. It will be good then to reflect on those who showed us a welcome, lifted our spirits and made us feel good about ourselves. It will be good to reflect on those who gave us a positive experience of faith, hope and charity. We are copy-cats!

But it will also be good for us to reflect on the friendship of God to us. I notice that quote on our website: "the legionaries' essential mainstay must be this knowledge of the companionship of God, their good Father, in their two-fold work of sanctifying themselves and serving their neighbour". Hear what it speaks of, a companionship of God. In fact only by coming to know how much God loves us and is with us can we come to carry in us the kind of friendship every human being is looking for. Only in the company of Jesus and his mother can we begin to learn to do to others as we would like others to do to us. Prayer adoration and friendly converse with God are essential to our legionary enterprise.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill