



# Allocutio



Presentata Curia 25 th July 2013

Allocutio: The Good Samaritan

“A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.” Who was that man? Perhaps he was going on a visit to see his elderly parents. Perhaps he was going down to pick up a child who had spent the summer in holiday camp? Perhaps he was going down to purchase a supply of olives or oranges or some other business. Perhaps he was a tradesman called in by the local council to do a job in the town hall. We are not even told if he was a Jew, a Samaritan or a gentile. All we are told is that he was a man. And that is what Christ was clearly intending : a man, a member of humanity as a whole. He is not identified since in fact he represents all of us. He was, if I might use the Hebrew term an Adam.

He has had a bad experience and is in bad shape, he is left for dead. Again he represents us all. He represents the first Adam fallen victim to Satan, and every Adam since, every human who has become a victim of sin and its effects. Right from the start it continued, Abel becoming a victim of his own brother Cain. History has left horror experiences in one form or other. This man represents us all who are victim of man’s inhumanity to man. And you people of the Legion of Mary have a tendency to find victims of inhumanity.

The condition of such people is compounded by the indifference of so many who prefer to pass by and not get involved. Sometimes the excuses have some truth because people can have limits and deadlines and not always be able to stop. But in fact that is no good for the person who is left for dead. And you know sometimes I find I have to make an effort to stop and wait for the other person and I have to say to myself, “Paul, there is that other stuff to be done but this person here and now is Christ before you in need of your time and ministrations ; so stay here. ” How often have I heard that voice say, “Paul, can you not spend one hour with me? ” All of broken humanity cries out for help and support and presence. May God help us not to be deaf to its cry.

The priest and Levite who pass by represent the officials of the Old Covenant. Their passing by represents a truth, namely that the old covenant was unable to respond to the needs of man’s brokenness and woundedness. It had been a limited Covenant, turning in on a chosen select few. But even for that chosen few it had been limited as St. Paul among others pointed out. Something more than commands is needed to deal with a broken world.

Who can help broken humanity? Who has such tenderness of heart, such warmth of love and deep compassion to stop and go to the trouble of pouring oil on wounds and carrying each wounded specimen of humanity at cost to self? There is only one Good Samaritan after whom every other good Samaritan is only a reflection. That person is Christ. The Gospel parable then is telling us that the one and only person who can save broken humanity is Christ. But perhaps we could also say that there was an assistant to him, Mary. For her Fiat allowed the Good Samaritan to come among us and share our woundedness.



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Now we should notice a few things. It would not be wrong to suspect that he expected nothing from this stranger. Given the Levite and priest response. This goodness he experiences is a wonder to the man, sheer gratuity, not deserved, not won, not expected. In other words it images the goodness of God. The Good Samaritan, namely Jesus, was someone the human family knew nothing of, not even his existence. He is God's surprise. But because he is God's Son he represents the sheer goodness and kindness of God whose heart is filled with compassion for each person. The question : Can you and I do something for some stranger to bring this reality home to them?

I go back to that upper room in which the frayed disciples were living in fear, broken men because of their failure to stand by him and support him in his need. They were like the priest and Levite who just saved their skins out of fear. You and I belong there too, don't we sometimes? And here now both the victim and also the Good Samaritan stands before them and heals them, pouring the oil and wine of the Resurrection on them. He who has suffered the depths of depravity has had his compassion confirmed and now He is not going to put them down more but lift them up to become good Samaritans themselves. And he calls us to that too.

Who is the inn-keeper to whom the Good Samaritan entrusts broken humanity? There is only one other inn-keeper in St. Luke's Gospel. The one who gave shelter to St Joseph and the pregnant woman with her unborn child. He represents the Church which has taken Jesus and his mother to heart and which now cares for broken humanity. Christ the Good Samaritan is asking the Church to help him out in his care of broken humanity. In other words you and I are being called upon to be at the service of this healer of humanity. The Good Samaritan is asking us all for a helping hand in his care of those who fall into hard circumstances.

That is our task as the Church! We do it at many levels. How many organisations across the world take their origins from the image of the Good Samaritan. Think : the Red Cross, Samaritans, Caritas International, St. Vincent De Paul Society, Knights of Malta, John of God brothers. But this Curia has a unique calling. But this day the Lord is asking you to help him. He is going to bring you someone today, tomorrow, this week. It will be someone wounded, whose woundedness may even disguise what is going on. But it will be someone in need of your compassion. Will you be someone too busy to care and just move on or will you be a good Samaritan or at least a good inn-keeper, apprentice to the Good Samaritan?

We need all reflect on whom we represent. The Good Samaritan yes. But also she who opened the door to him. Our work is really only of value if we lead them to him. Dr Kathleen Lynn, whom many of you will have heard of was my mother's GP. She once said to her, "Do not think young Lady that I will heal you. I am only his servant." Yes, we introduce to others the Good Samaritan, those he has given us to care for.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill