

Our role as neighbours

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of light.

James 1: 17



Tell me then, how is it that you are rich? The root and origin of it must have been injustice. Why? Because God in the beginning did not make one person rich and another poor. He left the earth free to all alike.

John Chrysostom



And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

1 Thess 3: 12

If you're going to care about the fall of the sparrow you can't pick and choose who's going to be the sparrow. It's everybody.

Madeleine L'Engle

In a society of strangers, in a world where rural villagers are now more the rarity than the norm, we all live private lives in increasingly larger groups where no-one is responsible and everyone is responsible at the same time. The great saints allow for no such excuses. They confront us with being keepers of the Garden wherever we are. Whoever we are, they show us, justice must reign, equality must prevail, and the defence of the little ones of God must be assured. By us.

It is your voice and mine, alone as well as together, that are meant to raise the alarms. If we don't point out the breakdowns in human community and make clear the unseen millions in need, they go on being unseen by the many.

Chittister, J (extract) *The Monastic Way* May 2015



If anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go the second mile also. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Mt 5: 40-42

The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to those who need it; the shoes rotting in your closet to the one who has no shoes. The money which you hoard belongs to the poor.

Basil of Caesarea

You did not choose me but I chose you.
And I appointed you to go and bear
fruit, fruit that will last.

Jn 15: 16

Lay people live in the world, .. engaged in every
work and business of the world. They are called
by God that, being led by the spirit to the
Gospel, they may contribute ... especially by
the witness of their life, ... in faith, hope and
charity they must manifest Christ to others.

LG 30



The messages in the scripture and other texts quoted in
this reflection are quite clear. We are to act towards
others in love, insisting on justice for all.

.. ***“justice must reign, equality must prevail and the
defence of God's little ones must be
assured.”*** (Chittister). **What should that look like?**

**What can we do to ensure that our ministry insists on
justice for all?**

God,

We know that you only operate in and through love. Let this love motivate us as we try to be real neighbours to those around us and within our ministry.

Give us the courage we need to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves: for those who seek asylum, for those who seek relief from isolation, for those who seek liberation from addiction, for those trying to regain lives of dignity in the face of degradation and abuse.

Guide us as we seek to alleviate immediate pressures people endure. Shepherd us as we challenge those societal structures which deny any release from the things that bind or oppress.

Make us gentle in our dealings with all people. Help us to grow in understanding of our neighbours' needs and desires. This is the path to love.

Amen.