

When I hear the words of today's readings and Gospel part of my mind relaxes into the bubble bath of "Okay, good, God loves me, I am holy, I belong to Christ, I give to charity etc., and as long as I can hold it together, even marginally, everything will be okay."

However, the other part of my mind goes "What? Reprove my neighbour? Do not deceive myself? Love my enemy? Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect? I am not a saint, and I know that the saints were not perfect either, I am doomed!"

It is at this time that the old adage of 'comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable' comes into direct focus: there is an insurmountable amount of suffering and injustice in this world; however, our task is not to overcome it, we cannot do that alone, but we can work at it.

We are the recipients of God's blessing, and like all the rights and privileges that we have not earned, we are called to the duty and responsibility to love those who do not love us.

This is no small task. I have often caught myself saying "I don't get it. I just don't understand how they can think that way." Really? Well, that is a good place to start. Real knowledge and understanding begin when you acknowledge that you know nothing: Only then can you sit down and start to lace up the shoes of another and start walking with (not ahead, not behind) those you do not understand.

When we come to understand from another perspective, we can develop true sympathy and harmony. The classic adage of Liberation Theology and Catholic Social Teaching, the 'preferential option for the poor,' is not only about charity but justice. When we charitably give away our coat, cloak and food we are also responsible to ask the question: "Why?" "Why does my neighbour need my coat? Why do we need the Supper Table and Food Bank?" Until we can start answering that question from the perspective of someone who lines up for dinner or bag lunch, there will be no justice in our charity.

Paul reminds us that humanity is constantly in a state of deceiving itself. "If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you should become wise." Jesus also demands that we be foolish in the same way – let your enemy hit you again, if you lose money to someone: give them even more money. What kind of foolishness is this? The foolishness of justice, a deep and radical new way of coming to understand the other.

Let us become fools, fools in love with love, justice and the dream of being perfect as our heavenly God is perfect.

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