



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace

Readings: Wisdom 2: 12, 17-20, Ps 53, James 3:16-4:3, Mark 9: 30-37

James Chapter 3: 'For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. What causes wars, and what causes fighting among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. You covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask to spend it on your passions.'

On this Home Missions Sunday, our fathers in God have much to say to us for we are embarked upon the New Evangelisation. Then again it was only last week that we were being urged by our Holy Father to be the first to make a corporate response to the fleeing Christian.

Home mission – Evangelisation - Refugee aid. Can we do them all? How do they fit together?

Syria first.....That unhappy country has seen its cities in ruins, its history trashed and its people spilling over the borders into a hapless and long tortured Levant and now filling the roads into Europe. They are victims of a real life Game of Thrones. On the one side sits a client state, Muslim but

secular, propped up by an ally, Russia, whose interests include the maintenance of that secularity, the defence of the hitherto protected Christians minority and, most pressing for its own security, a strong military discouragement to the numerous flammable 'Stans' and would be 'Khanates' that ring its southern border. Opposed stand two coming powers, Saudi Arabia and Persia (Iran) whose modern historical irrelevance has been transformed, in our lifetime, by the long gush of oil money and the resurgence of the original puritanical and fiercely militaristic Islam. To add piquancy to the horror show, these twin paymasters of terror are opposed to each other.

The West, which has demonstrated a terrifying lack of historical, cultural and religious understanding in its recent near eastern escapades, patronises one of the factions and demonises the other three. Its leaders have spent more legislative energy on the pressing issues of bailing out bankers, banning foxhunting, widening the killing fields of the abortionists and celebrating unnatural unions than on serious informed foreign policy. The people of the West's hearts go out to the plight of the refugees of these seemingly endless wars but we also wait in trepidation for the next wave of migrants to be settled on the poorest areas of our cities with no realistic prospect of cultural assimilation and little addition to the needful services.

The European Union, or Greater Germany as it is rapidly becoming, gives orders from Berlin to its subjects on what they must do in the unfolding crisis. Like most of the West, Germany has need of immigration because its policies of contraception and abortion have effectively wiped out the future. Germany has the world's lowest birthrate and must, within fifteen years, replace 6 million missing workers to sustain its economy. Its

apparent immense generosity in offering to take half a million migrants a year begins to be more comprehensible. (Germany's population is little changed from 1939 except that 20% are now from immigrant stock.)

Meanwhile we fret that we should do more and yet are anxious that such generosity will not solve the long term problem and may jeopardise our own security. Cardinal Schonborn has told us not to fear invasion but the record of the last fifty years is not reassuring to many who live in the poorer areas of European cities and who have had to do the hard and often thankless community work that their political masters have merely talked about from the more comfortable seats.

So we as Catholics, as citizens, as voters, have a real dilemma. We want to help the needy whose plight nightly appears in our living rooms.

Our hearts go out to the displaced families in the camps while we are simultaneously alarmed by the majority of aggressive young single men swarming through our non-existent borders. We also know that moving the Middle East (or Africa for that matter) to Europe may solve the labour shortage of Europe's self-inflicted demographic disaster, but it will not resolve the tragedies of Syria or Libya or diminish the wickedness of the empire builders who have concocted these tragedies and continue to fuel the fires that drive the desperate to set sail in unseaworthy colanders or footslog through the Balkans onto the uncertain but hopeful roads of Europe.

What, therefore, can we do? What, indeed, must we do? St. James...

'The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without doubt or insincerity. The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.'

Here we have been richly blessed by the compassionate imagination and strong practical understanding of mercy by our Holy Father, Francis. He has simply asked that every Catholic parish take in, sponsor, adopt a refugee family. That would make us, nationwide, responsible for the nurturing of 2,500 families. The genius of the Catholic Church, the universal family of Christ, is that this request will echo to every corner of the world. The wisdom of Pope Francis means that each one of us is given a practical, realistic, organic and achievable task. The governments will, no doubt, provide most of the initial material wherewithal for the refugee but we are to provide that welcome, that encouragement, that friendship, that loving community, that help in adjusting and assimilating, learning and contributing, that sense of belonging that these desperate fugitives need above all. Such practical compassion enables the broken to heal and the exile to find a home in a strange city. In so doing we will be fulfilling our duty, building up our communities and preaching the Gospel on Home Mission in the most observable and practical way possible and others of faith and of no faith may very well want to join us.

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