



## July 11, 2010 Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

*"For this command...is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out."* Deuteronomy 30:11&14

Dear Friends;

The great 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop and Doctor of the Church, St Augustine stated,

"Love God and do what you will.

If you hold your peace, through love hold your peace;

if you cry out, through love cry out;

if you correct, through love, correct. ...

Let the root of love be within; of this root nothing can spring but what is good." (*Tractatus VII*, 8).

The fulfillment of the Law of God is to be found in love. This is what today's readings remind us. The law of God is not an external force to coerce us into being good. It is yearning to be one with God and our neighbor. This is written in the fabric of our being—carved in our hearts.

The story of the Good Samaritan that we read in Luke's Gospel today, tells us about how far love goes. Love is not an abstract concept—warm feelings that I have about humanity in general. Love is concrete and is not afraid to get its hands dirty. And sometimes love calls us beyond the neat little legal categories that we have created.

When the priest and Levite walk past the man who was left for dead they are fulfilling the law. They are on their way to do their priestly service. If they were to touch a dead person they would be ritually contaminated and not fit for service in the Temple. So they fulfill the law but have not love.

The Good Samaritan represents someone who is an outcast. (In our time Jesus may have used the example of the undocumented farm worker). It is this outcast who is not afraid to be inconvenienced. He gets his hands dirty. He goes out of his way to take care of the stranger. He shows love. He does not stop to consider whether or not the person is deserving of his help. He sees the need and responds.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Pastor, defender of Jews and martyred by the Nazis wrote: "Neighborliness is not a quality in other people; it is simply their claim on ourselves. We have literally no time to sit down and ask ourselves whether so-and-so is our neighbor or not. We must get into action and obey; we must behave like a neighbor to him" (*Testament to Freedom*, Harper SanFrancisco: 1995)

We are living in very difficult times when it is easier to turn a blind eye to those in need because they are so many. If we would act as true disciples of Jesus we must be willing to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty. Both love and humanity is a messy yet always worthwhile. That's what Christ's own coming, death and resurrection tell us.

Peace

*Fr Ron*