



LifeLink 2020 Christmas Appeal Liturgical Service

Speech

**By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth
Tuesday, 2 November, 2020

The parable of the Good Samaritan is probably one of the best known of Jesus' parables. It features strongly in many of the threads of Catholic spirituality. It is, for example, at the heart of the charism of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan founded in Sydney by Bishop Polding in Sydney 1857 and still very active in the Church here in Australia and in other parts of the world as well.

The story of the Good Samaritan is familiar to us all. It speaks of love of neighbor and of practical, down-to-earth faith which is never content with words but knows that words have to be put into action.

For me the most powerful part of the story is the description of the Samaritan man as someone who was "*moved with pity*". What a difference between this man and the priest and the levite who were moved by something other than pity: by a desire not to get involved; by a determination not to incur the ritual impurity which would have resulted from them tending to someone's bleeding wounds; or perhaps by a fear that the robbers who had beaten up the traveller might still be lurking in the bushes waiting to ambush anyone else who was foolish enough to do anything other than get out of there as quickly as they could.

To speak of being "*moved with pity*" is really to speak of a person's heart. Tonight, as we launch the Archbishop's Christmas LifeLink Appeal for 2020, it is an invitation to us to think about what being moved with pity would look like in our own situation – and, of course, whatever else it might mean it must surely mean that we won't simply stand still, idly watching on, as people struggle, and suffer, and go without. – we will be moved to do something about it.

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone. Christmas 2020 will be especially challenging for so many people who, in more normal times, might not be in great need of help but who, because of sickness, unemployment or other unforeseen financial and personal difficulties, might well be as much in need of the soothing oil of kindness and generosity as the injured man was of the oil and wine poured on his wounds by the Good Samaritan.

It goes without saying that the raising of money through the Christmas LifeLink appeal is an important and practical way of lifting the burden of loneliness, of poverty, of homelessness and of hopelessness for many people who access our LifeLink agencies. But beyond the raising of



money it would be my hope that what really happens is that we, and the people of our parishes, will respond as generously as we can because we have allowed the Lord to mould our hearts so that we really are moved with pity: that we see as Jesus sees, and listen as Jesus listens, and respond as Jesus responds, and love as Jesus loves. Then we will have really taken the parable of the Good Samaritan to heart because we will, as Jesus says in relation to the Good Samaritan, “go and do likewise”.