

**PROPER 13** Gospel (parable of foolish farmer) speaks of fundamental attitudes

Murder of French priest saying mass in France challenges fundamental attitudes that lie at the heart of the Gospel.

Justin Welby tweeted on the day of the attack 'Evil attacks the weakest, denies truth and love, is defeated through Jesus Christ.'

**Romans 12**

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.<sup>[c]</sup> Do not be conceited.

<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"<sup>[d]</sup> says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Cross and Resurrection**

Death and darkness do not have the ultimate power – life and light will ultimately triumph  
e.g. New Year Service in Kalvinter Presbyterian Church in Budapest.

Goes beyond defiance – proclaiming the positive power of love

The power of the other cheek, the power of the second mile

The power of 'Father forgive – for they know not what they do.'

No, Jesus absorbs the violence that comes from us not from God. He receives our blows, our punishments, our disdain. And, despite his innocence – or, rather, precisely because of it – he refuses to answer back in kind. No more an eye for an eye.

In other words, the sacrifice of the cross is the non-violent absorption of human violence. The offer of love in return for hate, even to the point of death. This is the horrendous price that peace is sometimes asked to pay. This is what makes the eucharistic sacrifice life-giving and not some historical death cult. And this is the sacrifice that Father Jacques was celebrating as he died. He died as a priest, doing what priests do. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Giles Fraser – ex priest writing in the Guardian

He was constantly searching how to give concrete form to heartfelt compassion, especially towards the poor. He liked to quote Saint Augustine: “Love, and say it with your life.” This sometimes led him to surprising steps. On one occasion, he came back from a stay in Calcutta with a baby in his arms, a little girl that Mother Teresa had entrusted to him, in the hope that going to Europe would save her life – which turned out to be true. He also welcomed to the village of Taizé and helped to settle there two widows from Vietnam, with their large families of children, whom he had met while visiting a refugee camp in Thailand.

The need to be concrete: this characteristic of his was also seen in his gift for arranging a room or a house. He did not like to construct buildings. When this was absolutely necessary, they had to be quite simple, very low, and if possible built with re-used material. But he loved transforming places. Using very little, he tried to create beauty. At a certain point a new church had to be built at Taizé, but he resisted the project for a long time, and afterwards he was continually adapting and changing the arrangements. I noticed this even in the impoverished neighbourhood of Mathare Valley in Kenya, where we stayed for a few weeks before some of

the brothers came to live there for many years. In that poor shack in the midst of squalor, he found a way of adding some beauty, using almost nothing. As he used to say, we would like to do everything to make life beautiful for those around us.

Brother Roger often referred to the Beatitudes, and he sometimes said about himself: Je suis un pauvre, “I am a poor man.” He called us, the brothers, not to be spiritual masters but people who listen. He referred to his ministry as prior as being a “poor servant of communion within the community”. He did not hide his vulnerability.

Now, our little community feels impelled to continue along the way he opened up. It is a way of trust. For him the word “trust” was not a facile expression. It contains an appeal: to welcome very simply the love that God bears towards everyone, to root our lives in that love, and to take the risks that that implies.

To lose that intuition would lead us to impose burdens on those who come seeking the living water. Faith in this love is a wholly simple reality, so simple that everyone can receive it. And this faith can move mountains. Then, even if the world is often torn apart by violence and conflict, the way we look on it can be filled with hope.

Brother Alois