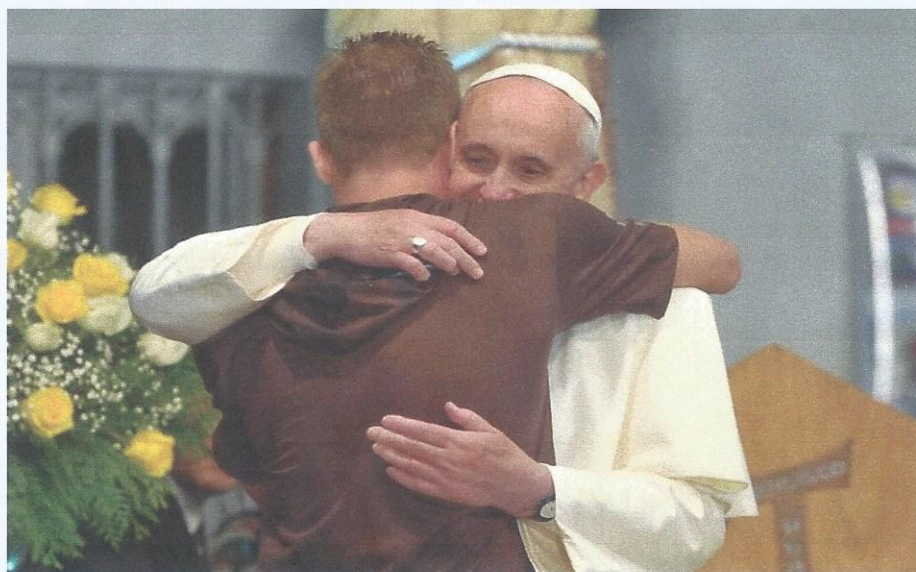




**Church of St Columba
Chesham
8pm, Tuesday
15 December 2020**



**An evening of Reflection, Exposition,
Contemplative Music for Advent**

based on Pope Francis encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*

Introduction

Opening Music

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Reflection

The Good Samaritan

'We cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast'

The Good Samaritan gave something that in our frenetic world we cling to tightly, he gave his time. Certainly he had his own plans that day, his own needs, commitments and desires. Yet he was able to put all that aside when confronted by someone in need. Without even knowing the man he saw him as deserving of his time and attention.

By his actions the Good Samaritan showed that the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes: life is a time of interaction.

The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good.

It speaks to us of an essential but often forgotten aspect of our common humanity: we were created for a fulfilment that can only be found in love. We cannot be indifferent to suffering, we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast.

Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others? Will we bend down and help others up? This is today's challenge, and we should not be afraid to face it.



Music and silence:

Reflection

The Good Samaritan

‘We are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members’.

The parable evokes the interior struggle that each of us experiences as we gradually come to know ourselves through relationships with our brothers and sisters. Sooner or later we will encounter a person who is suffering. Each day we have to decide whether to be a good Samaritan or indifferent bystanders. And if we extend our gaze to the history of our own lives and that of the entire world, all of us are, or have been, like each of the characters in the parable. All of us have in ourselves something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by, and something of the Good Samaritan.

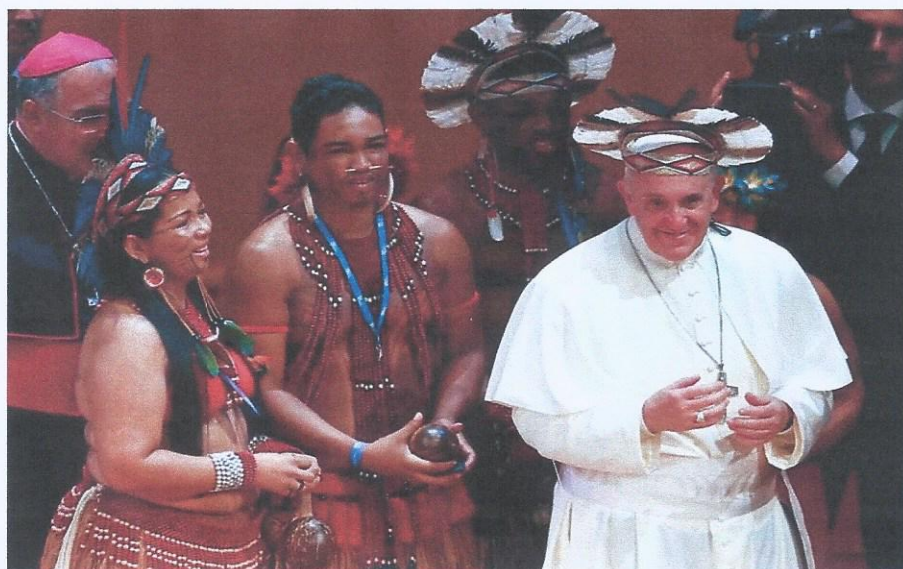
Each day offers us a new opportunity and new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us.

Let us take an active part in realising and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity and to be good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting great hatred and resentment.

We need just a desire to be a community and integrate and lift up the fallen. Others may continue to use politics and the economy as an arena for their own power plays. For our part let us foster what is good and place ourselves at its service.

Difficulties that seem overwhelming, are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation that can only lead to acquiescence. Yet let us not do this alone as individuals. The good Samaritan discovered an innkeeper who could care for the man. We too are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members.

Music and silence:



Reflection

The Good Samaritan

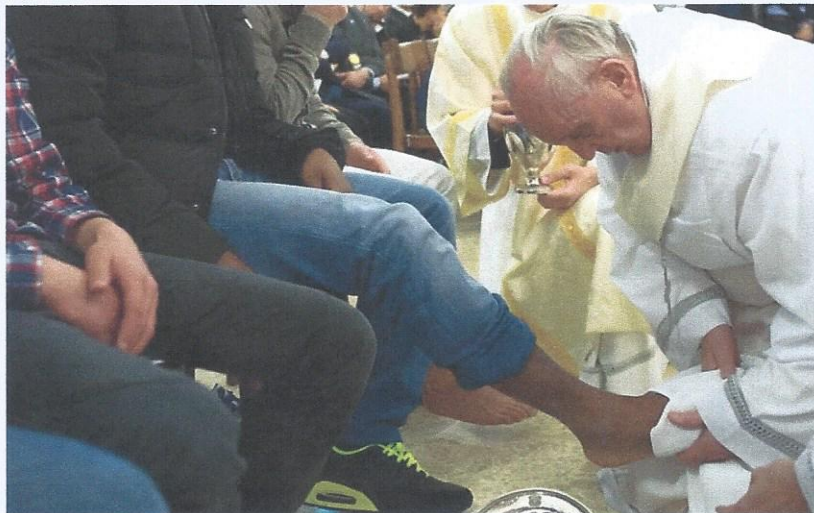
'Our faith must help open our hearts to our sisters and brothers'.

The passers by were religious. It shows that belief in God and the worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are actually living in a way pleasing to God. Our faith must help open our hearts to our brothers and sisters.

Faith has untold power to inspire and sustain our respect for others, for believers come to know that God loves every man and woman with infinite love and thereby confers infinite dignity upon all humanity. No-one is beyond the scope of his universal love.

The Samaritan who stopped along the way departed without expecting recognition and gratitude.

Jesus concluded the parable by saying "Go and do like wise." In other words he challenges us to put aside all differences and in the face of suffering, to draw near to others with no questions asked.



Music and silence:

Reflection

International relationships and encounter with each other Enriching our social action and outreach

For a healthy relationship between love of one's native land and a sense of belonging to our larger human family, it is helpful to keep in mind that global society is not the sum total of different countries, but rather the communion that exists among them.

All individuals, whatever their origin, know that they are part of the greater human family, without which they will not be able to understand themselves fully.

To see things in this way brings the joyful realisation that no one people, culture or individual can achieve everything on its own: to attain fulfilment in life we need others. An awareness of our own limitation and incompleteness, far from being a threat, becomes the key to envisaging and pursuing a common project.

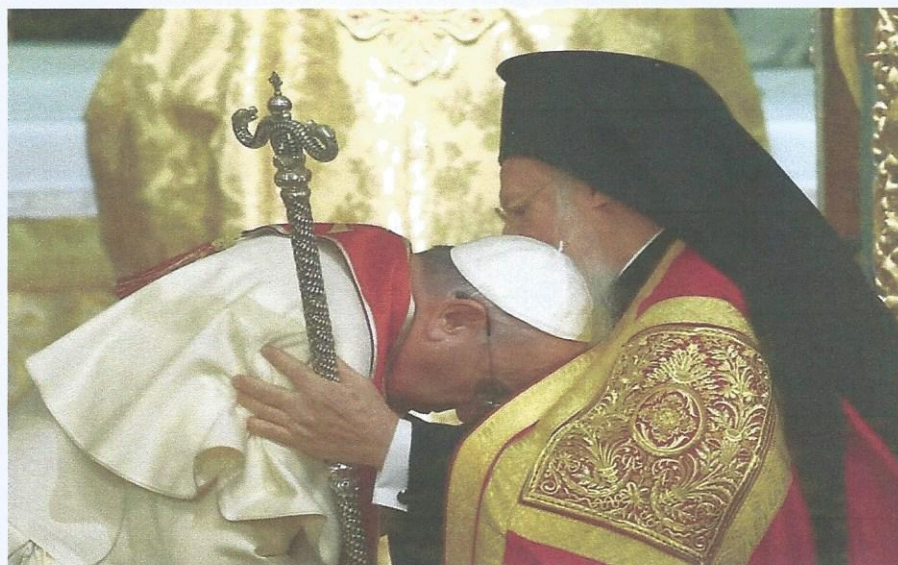
Life for all its confrontation, is the art of encounter. I have frequently called for the growth of a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions.

Each of us can learn something from others. No-one is useless and no-one is expendable. This also means finding ways to include those on the peripheries of life.

What is important is to create processes of encounter, processes that build people that can accept differences.

A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same.

Music and silence:



Prayer from *Fratelli Tutti*

May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognise the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams.
Amen

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves.
Amen

Divine Praises and Blessing

Closing Music

