

Encouragement Encouragement

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Generosity of Heart ...

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A little and beautiful poem caught my attention.

A generous soul may go unnoticed
in the short time
we spend on earth
In a world
where good means nothing
It is power that gains
And rich who prevail
And the kindhearted people
who give their tomorrows
to others
are left with nothing
but patronising glances
They are the ones
who will one day take their last breath
with no regrets
and can honestly say
they are pure of heart
and deserve a place in the heavens.

Kristy Richards

It struck me especially for this attribute is often neglected. Yes, it can be substituted for words such as kindness, altruism, all heart giving, goodness, bounty but none really convey the essence of the *grace* of generosity. Sometimes the opposite expresses the meaning such as stinginess, greed, meanness and unkindness. There are many references to acts of generosity in the Scripture and each has its special intention to point out what is required to be called generous and what it entails.

It is a good question to ask oneself and that is what does it mean to be generous? In a world where self-preservation is often heralded as prudence and self-interest a key to maturity, 'poor' generosity does not get a look in. Yet we also are bombarded with cries for help from many charities, all worthy causes, the poor and sick abound in our world and the lists seem to get longer and longer as catastrophes mount.

Indeed we seem to be required to have ever deeper purses to keep up. It is true that many, many people are aware of the needs of others and give financial support at such times.

We know how much Jesus praised the widow who gave from her nothing and did so quietly. She did not advertise her giving and gave ALL she had. There is the Good Samaritan who paid for the care of the wounded man, an outsider, who took a chance of giving and twice generously as he would not ever be thanked for His good deed. What therefore differentiates generosity from merely giving out of some kind of pressure or self-interest?

Firstly generosity itself is a grace, we become generous because Jesus was generous and if we live and abide with Him and in him we receive the grace of giving. The ultimate generosity of God lies in the fact the he gave His only Son, yes **only** Son to us die for us and out of love for the world and so that we could have eternal life. That simple statement is the starting point of true generosity. This was not a conditional act or one with reservations but a totally absorbing giving without any limits of time and space, of condition and limitations but an act of supreme love. It is this love that we demonstrate if we become generous.

Some people have a natural predisposition to kindness others have to work a little harder but the grace to be generous is given to those who seek it. In a village in India now almost destroyed by fanatical supporters of other faiths many Christian lives were lost in a brutal manner. One young girl, totally devastated by seeing her father, brothers and sister killed in a barbaric manner, begged her mother for explanation and comfort. Her mother told her that how *blessed* she was to be able to be persecuted for her faith and that God had been

"Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but in giving me that which you need more than I do"

Kahlil Gibran

generous to their family. The young girl bowed to her mother's wisdom and grace and continued to both believe and serve those who were left. This indeed is another form of generosity, a generosity of heart. It links the person with the generosity of Jesus on the Cross and becomes self-sacrificing.

There are many other ways therefore of being generous other than by finance. Giving money is probably the easiest. But again we must remember that the acid test of the worth of our generosity is 'not how much you give but how much you have left' the saying of a wise man. It is giving out of our nothing that truly transforms the act.

This applies also to many other ways that generosity can be exercised. The essential element of a generous heart or spirit is the thinking less of the cost to self but the need of the other. We are given so many wonderful gifts. We are given time, talents and may treasured possessions which we have to put and give away freely. The last word being the key to generosity. We have to give without any means to safeguard our interests or even the displeasure of others, criticism or mockery. St Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Cor.9-7) 'Each one must give as he decides in his heart, not reluctantly, or under compulsions, for God loves a cheerful giver.' Our cheerfulness in giving is a sign of grace for it shows that we give from the largeness of our heart and that whatever we seem to have lost is gained a million time over in the joy and comfort it gave the person in need. It comes back to us for generosity has a way of coming back to us. Recently our Parish Priest stated a little paradox on this subject and I hope I get the essence of it 'What you keep you lose, what you give away you keep' which he said was found on a tombstone. Jesus himself said: 'Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you use it will be the measured back to you.'(Luke 6:38)

This can be seen so well in people who give their lives for the service of others. They seem to be always giving 'themselves' away so to speak pouring themselves out for others and yet they lack nothing. Sometimes their purses are filled so that they can keep on giving; sometimes they are filled with exuberant Joy when they are going

through trials as a result of their generous acts. Sometimes they are called mad and not sparing of themselves and yet they lack no energy when they are giving. How can we give totally of ourselves then? It is in the heart that the tale is told. We all have time to listen to others. We sometimes forget that our neighbour requires simply to be listened to without reserve. We can love those who cause us great pain or distress or whom we simply find difficult. We can pay attention to the groaning of those less able or privileged than ourselves even if it seems uncomfortable for us. We can step over the barriers or boundaries of race, class or manmade divisions to love and include. We can forgive those who have hurt us often deeply. All these action require a great generosity of heart. If we pray for this generosity we will be grated the means to live it out for God cannot act against Himself. It is in going across what humanly speaking is difficult for us, yet requires action of some kind that we gain this generosity. Praying for all these intentions and for courage and mercy will also bring about a generous spirit within us. Dare we take the chance which will lead us to perfect our love and freedom? Halina Holman



Pope Francis

When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them—some food, a place in our homes, our time—not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched. I am well aware that when someone needing food knocks at your door, you always find a way of sharing food; as the proverb says, one can always 'add more water to the beans'! Is it possible to add more water to the beans?...Always?...And you do so with love, demonstrating that true riches consist not in materials things, but in the heart!

Visit to the Community at Varginha, 25/7/13.

Feast Days in July

- 3rd St Thomas Apostle 11th St Benedict
- 14th St Kiri Tekanwitha 15th St Bonaventure
- 16th Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- 22nd St Mary Magdalene
- 26th St Anna and Joachim
- 29th St Martha 31st St Ignatius of Loyola

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