

Homily by Rev. Chris Stevens 14th March 2020

Verse 17 of John 15 is that key we should all look for in our Gospel reading - that which turns the faith we profess into the faith we live. "My command to you is to love one another." Where I lived for over thirty of the past thirty five years, that wonderful land known merely as "Yorkshire" there's a well known group of people who are known as the "Nobbuts". Nobbuts would look at the Command "My command to you is to love one another" and then go - Nobbut, what about that argumentative blighter that lives down our road, or Nobbut - what about these or those members of our community who are not like us. But we as Catholic Christians - and you especially - are called not to be Nobbuts in our daily lives, but live our lives differently and on a new direction.

So Jesus in the Gospel is asking us to think differently- to think about this new direction. In October 1981, Pope John Paul II said: "It is necessary for the rich legacy left by Teresa of Jesus to be deeply reconsidered so that it can effect a renewal of the inner life of your nation and thereby influence the renewal of life in the entire church in all its aspects. The giant figure of the Great Teresa should act as a strong encouragement in that direction not only on a local or national scale but also on a universal scale"

You are part of this new local, national and universal direction. So how do you, as members of this order, change this direction away from the consumerist, self-centred ways to another way? How do we change the direction of this megasized supertanker of the meaningless life of so many around? Just how do we silence the Nobbuts we all know?

It's at this point in the Homily where the new magic formula is rolled out for us all to be part of. The new and exciting form of liturgy, the new and exciting engagement techniques to bring swathes of new people into our church. Err No. If there ever was a super new way (other than Vatican 2) it has never existed.

I would contend that we look more closer to your home. That may be looking at groups of people who have a long and distinguished order of rules which have stood the test of time. Maybe people like yourselves. So how does Wikipedia define your order? "They practice contemplative prayer while living lives of charity in their common occupations. They profess a promise to the Order patterned on the monastic vows which guides their life." Sometimes, as we know, the simplest solution to a problem is the one that has been staring us in the face for so long.

So I, on behalf of those who have judged you worthy of your future role in the Discalced Carmelites, would ask you to take up your calling and embrace it with both hands. Love it, care for it and live it. And turn the supertanker around as quick as you can.