

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

Mass: Fridays at 6 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Sanctuary

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10-12

July 17th, 2016 – Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Missal p 192 et seqq.): Gen 18:1-10 • Ps 15:2-5 • Col 1:24-28 • Lk 10:38-42

Celebrant: Fr Wolfgang Felber

The human being always comes first

We all know this story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus invents this story to tell something very profound to his listeners. What is it about? The starting point is the question of the expert in religious law: "*Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?*" The expert gives an answer that we all know: "*You must love the Lord your God and you must love your neighbor as yourself.*"

To us, this is not surprising, but for the colleagues of this expert in the time of Jesus this was extraordinary. Luke makes the man say that there is a link between love of God and love of neighbor. This was not linked for the pious Jews at that time – love of God and love of neighbor were independent from each other. Luke makes the man say "And who is my neighbor?" so as to show the new point of view of Jesus: the human person is in the center; the human person is the place where you meet God because God himself became one of us.

Luke wants us no longer to look into the skies, but to look at our world as it is. Luke says: Jesus wants you to find God not only in the temple, in the cult, but to find God in your neighbor, in other human beings. This is where you find your God! Luke illustrates this somewhat idealistic idea by the story of the man who fell among the robbers. This story is a kind of program for a Christian life as it should be. And it is a pure provocation for the listeners of Luke's gospel.

Luke presents three persons – they all show their attitude towards other human beings. They show their attitude towards people in need by their action. Two of them in a way that makes us shiver – they turn away. The message of Jesus is clear: If you are looking for God honestly, if you want to love God, you can never avoid the human person beside you. For Jesus, the love of neighbor is at least as important as the law-abidance the pious Jews proclaimed. Certainly, we know that Jesus does have clear ideas about the relation to God, what we are supposed to do and to avoid.

But the human being always comes first. This is the point of the story of the Good Samaritan. The relation to God for a Christian can only succeed via the human person. And this has marked the Christian culture. This is the measure for our message. Our credibility as the Church of Jesus depends upon it. There must not be any prejudices towards the human beings in this world from the side of the Church. There must not be any fear of contact with the human beings of our world. The Church needs to meet people at eye level.

The Church often pretends to know the people of our time thoroughly because the Church pretends to have eternal truths about humanity. This is not enough. Humanity develops, our society develops, our knowledge develops – so the Church needs to be in contact with the world in order to get to know it. The message of Jesus needs to have something to do with the people of our time. The liturgy we celebrate needs to have something to do with the life of the people.

I am happy that here in All Saints we have a structure that allows so much participation, that allows all of us to get together and celebrate together – here in the church, but also in the community hall.

This is what I read in today's gospel: Jesus puts the human being in the center of our faith. And: We need to open our eyes to the needs of others; they are the privileged way to God for us.

Fr Wolfgang Felber, SJ

Welcome to All Saints! Many of us are gone for the summer and return in August but would like to welcome you to our community.

A few events to look forward to:

- **Confirmation Mass on Saturday, October 8th (Contact: Lynn Brinda)**
- **Fall Family Bazaar on Saturday, September 17th. Contact Heide: h.doblhofer@t-online.de**
- **Welcome BBQ Potluck on Sunday, September 11th after Mass. Please bring a side-dish.**

Have a great summer everyone!

Volunteers sought: If you are a lector, altar server or would like to host hospitality after Mass, let Konrad, Heide or Buck know so we can add your names to the bulletin.

Designated collections are for special purposes in the Archdiocese of Berlin and are transferred in full. **However, in agreement with the Archdiocese, All Saints receives no financial support, so we are completely dependent upon your donations.** Please continue to donate to All Saints by using the **WHITE ENVELOPES** stamped "**ALL SAINTS FUND**" and/or transferring your donation to the Pax-Bank account written below. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** • ***Friends of All Saints e.V.*, IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18, BIC: GENODED1PAX**