

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Most of what you receive from me are not my own inspirations.*

*A priest from San Diego shared this homily with me, so I share it with you in order that you know I am not alone in fighting for our Catholic faith against the novelties of some clergy who, under the guise of “conscience formation”, wish to form my conscience according to their own ideas to direct to their predetermined outcomes, which I see as a form of control rather than real freedom to make decisions with God in my own conscience.*

*I offer it because it helps me to understand that indeed I am in **solidarity** with all Christians and to some extent with the world.*

*It shows me that in **subsidiarity** I need to be charitable in my way rather than to be taxed by institutions such as government, or even the church either worldwide or locally who take my money and spend it their own way with no further input from me.*

*It reminds me of my responsibility to show **mercy** those who are in need as they come into my life and as God moves me to act in conscience.*

*In light of this I just sent a donation to Sacred Heart Church Olema CA which is struggling to stay alive with its small congregation.*

<https://cal-catholic.com/whats-a-priest-to-do-when-no-one-comes-to-mass/>

*Corporal Works of Mercy*

- *To feed the hungry;*
- *To give drink to the thirsty;*
- *To clothe the naked;*
- *To shelter the homeless;*
- *To visit the sick;*
- *To ransom the captive;*
- *To bury the dead.*

*The spiritual works of mercy are:*

- *To instruct the ignorant;*
- *To counsel the doubtful;*
- *To admonish sinners;*
- *To bear wrongs patiently;*
- *To forgive offenses willingly;*
- *To comfort the afflicted;*
- *To pray for the living and the dead.*

## 5<sup>th</sup> A: Solidarity, Subsidiarity and the Corporal Works of Mercy

A new term has crept into our lexicon in the past decade or so. ‘Social justice warrior, the supposedly new and supposedly activist person ostensibly fighting for human rights, but more times than not completely intolerant of any viewpoint other than their own. I say supposedly activist because we never seem to see them doing anything that actually comforts the downtrodden and oppressed. They cause a lot of mayhem marching through the streets with their faces masked, yet never do anything to materially benefit others.

We’ve been hearing from the Prophet Isaiah the last several weeks. This week he is addressing the situation in the post exilic period when the Jews had returned home from Babylon only to find the holy land in ruin. It was during that initial rebuilding that the Jews adopted a rather hardhearted attitude toward even their own kind, such that it was pretty much every man for himself as they tried to eke out a living from the land. Isaiah today is giving the Jews some very concrete moral teachings; how they might actually be both the salt of the earth and light for the world as our Lord would say. He does not offer abstractions about social justice. He’s not promoting attitudes like a preferential option for the poor. He says share your bread when you see your neighbor hungry; shelter the homeless; clothe the naked, then your light will shine forth like the dawn.

He doesn’t say you need to support a political party that helps the poor, but rather exhorts **us** to do it! This is the fundamental problem with a welfare state: it usurps our God given duty to help those in need; to provide for those less fortunate than ourselves. When the state assumes all the responsibility for social welfare and levies exorbitant taxes to pay for their massive programs they leave us citizens demotivated, complacent, and unable to give to charities that do the most to relieve the sufferings of our brothers and sisters.

There are two terms in Catholic social teaching of which every serious Christian should be. They are solidarity and subsidiarity. The term solidarity was of course made famous by the Polish workers movement that was instrumental in the fall of communism throughout the eastern bloc; when western democracies were compelled to be connected and supportive of those who did not enjoy our freedom and prosperity. Solidarity then is the ***unity*** and ***mutual interdependence*** of all peoples, and implies compassion and concern for the well being of all others. Subsidiarity is the belief that all problems and projects should be handled at the lowest possible level, keep the solution on the same level as the problem; the more

local the effort the more efficient it is bound to be. Highly centralized authoritarian governments are at odds with the principle of subsidiarity.

This is why every diocese is its own self contained local church, and every ordinary bishop has both the right and responsibility to advance the gospel and administer the temporal goods of the diocese within the limits of scripture and tradition, without a lot of interference from the Vatican. Subsidiarity in its secular form was guided our founding fathers who preferred states' rights to a highly centralized Federal government.

To act upon these principles of solidarity and subsidiarity are not simply options for us Christians. Recall from Matthew's gospel that our being judged by the Lord Jesus as either sheep who inherit the kingdom or goats consigned to the place of Satan and his angels, will be based not simply on words and attitudes, but on our active participation in the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick and in prison, and to bury the dead.

The Church father Tertullian said "let the pagans say 'see how these Christians love one another'". It is of course much easier to observe loving actions than a righteous attitude. And as Isaiah says if you do these things your own wound shall be healed: good works are simply good for your soul. They move us outside of ourselves. It occurs to me that the most common psychological problems or wounds to the soul are the result of self absorption. "If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted then light shall rise for you in the darkness and gloom shall become for you like midday."