

Lent 5B

A very wealthy society lady died and went to the next world. As she looked about, she noticed that her maid, who had died some time before her, was living in a splendid mansion, while she herself was assigned to a rather insignificant little house. Immediately she complained to St Peter. 'Don't you know who I am? I am so-and-so, and yet I find that my maid has much more splendid accommodation than I have. What's going on?' St Peter replied, 'I'm sorry to disappoint you, Madam, but, you see, we can only build out of what you send up here, and, I'm afraid, this was the best we could do for you.'

How much material are we sending ahead of us? The only supplies we can use are those **selfless acts of love** which characterise our day to day lives here on earth. And if we are **meagre** in that department, then the material sent up won't amount to much.

I'm sure we all know people who **rarely seem to think of themselves** – the welfare of others, whether in their own families or in the community, oozes out of them - and it isn't done to gain recognition either. It's in their bones.

And then there are people **whose lives revolve around themselves** where the needs of others are not that high on their agenda. The more we journey towards God the further we travel away from self. It's the grain of wheat which falls into the ground and dies which produces a rich harvest.

But giving our lives in love **doesn't mean we impose ourselves** on people with our **preconceived** notions of what we think is good for them. In this way we can easily overlook their real needs. Our giving can be very peaceable and done through a **myriad of small** and often unnoticed ways. Jesus asks us to be

careful **not to parade** our good deeds before others to win their admiration.

When it comes to love, 'small' is often the most beautiful. A smile, a word of encouragement, a listening ear, a thank you card, all can speak far more eloquently the language of love than the big gesture. I often think about Simon of Cyrene who seemed to appear from nowhere to help Jesus carry His cross and then slips back into the crowd with no mention of him again, Veronica, who wiped the sweat and blood off His face – a small but courageous gesture we might say - but just what Jesus needed, and Joseph of Arimathaea who gave Jesus the tomb he had prepared for himself. When Jesus needed them most they were all in the right place at the right time with the right kind of help.

Jesus often comes to us in different guises and at times not of our choosing. When we put our own agenda on hold and focus on Him, unlike the woman in the opening story, God won't run short of material for the building of our heavenly home.