

Reflection at the Ecumenical Service

St Francis Church, Victoria, Gozo

Wednesday 24 January 2024

H.L. Mgr Anton Teuma, Bishop of Gozo

THE “GOOD SAMARITAN” ECUMENISM

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and beloved friends,

Thank you for gathering here today. I am truly honoured to have the opportunity to share with you a timeless and profound message that transcends boundaries and resonates with the core principles of compassion and unity. Today, I would like to reflect upon the Parable of the Good Samaritan and its relevance in fostering an open and inclusive approach to ecumenism.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan, as told by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (10:29-37), is a narrative that transcends the ages. In this story, a man is left beaten and bruised on the side of the road, ignored by those who should have helped. However, it is a Samaritan, someone considered an outsider and even an enemy by the cultural and religious standards of the time, who stops to show compassion and care.

This parable is not just a moral lesson about kindness; it is a profound call to transcend preconceived notions and prejudices. The Samaritan's actions challenge us to look beyond societal expectations, religious differences, and cultural divides. It invites us to embrace the universal truth that the essence of humanity lies in our ability to care for one another, irrespective of our backgrounds.

Now, let us draw parallels between the Good Samaritan and the concept of ecumenism. Ecumenism calls us to recognise the common ground that unites Christians across various denominations and traditions. It encourages us to set aside theological differences and collaborate in our shared pursuit of love, justice, and service to humanity.

Just as the Good Samaritan didn't hesitate to extend a helping hand to a stranger in need, ecumenism challenges us to reach across denominational lines and join hands with our brothers and sisters in faith. It prompts us to engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Through ecumenism, we can discover the richness of diversity within the Christian family, recognising that our shared commitment to love and serve others is more powerful than any theological distinctions that may separate us.

In a world that often seems divided by religious, cultural, and social differences, the Parable of the Good Samaritan serves as a guiding light. It reminds us that compassion knows no boundaries and that love has the power to bridge even the deepest divides. By embracing the spirit of the Good Samaritan and being open to ecumenism, we can collectively contribute to a world where unity triumphs over discord, and where our shared humanity becomes the focal point that unites us all.

Let us, therefore, go forth inspired by the example of the Good Samaritan, ready to build bridges of understanding, compassion, and unity. May our collective efforts in ecumenism be a testament to the transformative power of love that transcends all differences.

Thank you.