

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



A short time ago, in the course of my reading I came across a "revised version" of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Actually it was only the ending that had been revised. The unfortunate traveller was robbed, beaten and left for dead. The priest and the Levite came – and passed by on the other side of the road. But then comes the difference - I quote, "The sun beat down on the injured man all the rest of the day, and at nightfall it grew bitterly cold. No one else came that way, **and the man died**".

It gave me a shock! We are so used to the arrival of the Good Samaritan, like a Fairy Godmother waiting in the wings and appearing on cue; but perhaps in real life it wasn't always like that.

Did the priest and the Levite, in the revised version, happen to hear that a traveller had been found dead by the side of the road which they too had travelled? How would they have reacted, I wonder?

"I wish I'd stopped – but I was already late for my meeting".

"I thought he was just having a rest".

"It wasn't my business to get involved – the robbers might still have been around".

"This sort of thing happens far too often – the council should do something about it".

"I shall avoid that road in future".

"I couldn't have done anything – he was most likely dead already, anyway".

Excuses, excuses! We are, rightly I think, very ready to condemn the priest and the Levite for what they failed to do. But stop - are there occasions when we too could have helped someone, but failed to do so?

To me, this is a parable tailor-made for Christian Aid Week, which will shortly be here. We know a great deal about the needs of the millions of our human brothers and sisters who are less fortunate than we are. (Have you ever wondered why YOU just happened not to have been born as one of them?). Probably we have good intentions about giving them some help – which, the way things are, usually means putting hands into pockets. But do our good intentions always get translated into action?

Christian Aid Week makes it easy for us to help. There's the envelope – fill it! Fill it in thanksgiving for food, shelter, clothing, security – good things that we take for granted. Fill it remembering times when we have meant to help but didn't get round to it. Fill it so that fewer children may die from easily preventable causes – that communities may learn to be self-sufficient – that at least some of the wrongs and injustices of life may be remedied. - **FILL IT!**

May God bless our collecting, our giving, those whom we help but never see -
May God bless us all, every one.

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