



– and I know many of them who have found a way to do so remarkably freely – they deserve great respect, because they are very likely to feel a different sense of ownership of possessions earned by a lifetime of work compared to those who have, out of the blue, been handed something from the back of a truck. And that is why developing that attitude of “everything as gift” is crucial if we desire to become more charitable. Because the wealth accumulated by the “self-made” person (what an absurd and revealing title), even if it appears otherwise, is no less a gift than the ones those refugees carried from the back of our lorry.

### A LIFE OF RADICAL CHARITY

Anyone, regardless of their faith or culture, can choose this approach (and the refugees in Zagreb were Muslim, by the way). But to follow Christ is to make charity our identity, our way of being. We can no longer be charitable on a part-time basis or apply that attitude to certain parts of our lives only. We cannot make distinctions between groups of people who might qualify for our charity based on race, or religion, or whether we like them, or whether we agree with them. When we dare to call ourselves Christians we say “yes” to a life of radical charity.

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### Mass text

#### ENTRANCE ANTIIPHON

**All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to you, shall sing to your name, O Most High!**

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19

PSALM Psalm 39

RESPONSE **Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.**

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God. **R.**
2. You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. You do not ask for holocaust and victim. Instead, here am I. **R.**
3. In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart. **R.**

4. Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! We have found the Messiah – which means the Christ – grace and truth have come through him. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 1:35-42

COMMUNION ANTIIPHON

**You have prepared a table before me, and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.**

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Jonah 3:1-5, 10  
1 Corinthians 7:29-31  
Mark 1:14-20



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# SUNDAY BULLETIN

THINKING FAITH

## THE BREAD THAT BELONGS TO ALL

“Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,” said the one whose love for us would have him hanging, broken, from a cross (John 13:34). This gift of the cross – if we accept that we have been given it – creates a new starting point for our charity. If we recognise that in order to give we must receive, we can see here that we have been given something beyond measure. If we believe and accept the gift – and accept too that everything we will ever have, or be, is a gift – we will have received something that can fuel our giving for a lifetime and more. The more we develop a disposition that treats everything as a gift, the more instinctive and innate our charity becomes. We will feel compelled to share things that were never ours to keep. On one occasion during the war in the former Yugoslavia we were delivering truckloads of donated aid to refugees in Zagreb who had just fled from Northern Bosnia. They were in desperate need of even the most basic things. We noticed that as we unloaded the tinned and dried food, they were putting one-quarter of it aside into a separate pile in their store. They asked us if it would be OK for them to smuggle this back across the front line to families who were trapped there and living in even more dire circumstances. These were people who chose to share their gifts immediately, despite their poverty, hardly letting them enter their possession before giving them away. A lesson in detachment perhaps – when we see things as undeserved gifts rather than possessions that we have a right to, they become a lot easier to give away.

I have on occasion seen the opposite attitude from those of great wealth who have worked all their lives to earn it. Sometimes, even when such people decide in principle to give some of it away, the process becomes a tortured one. Endless exercises in due diligence, needs assessments and the exact matching of projects with their particular interests can make it extremely difficult and sometimes impossible for them to give at the scale they had originally promised. There might be several factors at play here – including the sophistication and experience of people so successful in business – but one cause seems to be an understandably deep attachment to the wealth they have devoted so much of their life to accumulating. When they manage to give



We continue this of articles adapt his new book by Macfarlane-Barrow founder of Mary

Charity and the of living generous

17 JANUARY 2021

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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