



Dear friends,

In 2014 when Pope Francis began his ministry as the leader of the Catholic Church, he made his first journey to the Italian island of Lampedusa to visit migrants who were risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea in search of a better life. The Pope has constantly spoken of the importance of welcoming others and offering them hospitality. He says that the issue is not just about the migrants, but that: 'it is all about us as well.' We are challenged to confront our fears and prejudices, probing the quality of our love and faith.

In the gospel of St Matthew for this Sunday (Mt 10:37-42), Jesus says that 'anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and those who welcome me welcomes the one who sent me.' Jesus gives the example of offering as little as a cup of water to someone who is thirsty, is doing the work of a disciple.

When we give of ourselves, without counting the cost of that giving, without resentment, or any hope of reward, then we will receive a far richer reward. In a sense the old saying: 'goodness is its own reward,' is very true. But giving without counting the cost, invites us to be more like Jesus.

St Benedict was the first saint to establish a monastery where brothers, (sometimes called monks) would live together centring their lives around prayer and works of God. St Benedict wrote a rule, or way for the monks to be able to live together, and in it he wrote: 'Whenever a person comes to the front door, you must offer them hospitality and welcome them as if it were Christ himself.' The theme of welcome and hospitality in St Matthew's gospel finds its climax at the end of the gospel at the Great Judgement Mt 25:31-46), when Jesus says over and over again: .... 'as often as you did (or failed to do it), to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it (or failed to do it) to me.'

In many small and countless ways, it is God himself who is the visitor in our daily lives. For when we welcome strangers, feed people who are hungry, clothe those who are naked, visit those who are sick, then it is Christ himself whom we are welcoming. And we, are changed by that encounter, to become more compassionate and forgiving through offering ourselves to those who have nothing to offer in return.

[Fr Kelvin](#)

