

Dear Parents

If you happen to be a devotee of Jamie Oliver's cooking programmes, you might have seen the series titled "Jamie's 30 Minute Meals". Perhaps, you read some of the promotion material amongst which was the following statement, "Jamie Oliver thinks everyone deserves to eat delicious nutritious food and in his new series, Jamie shows how to create a whole home-cooked feast from scratch, in the time it takes to heat up a ready meal." Fresh One Productions. Then, maybe, you were a little perplexed, even disappointed, to observe that the advertising breaks were all taken by Hungry Jacks, Coca Cola and Kentucky Fried Chicken!

Was the Broadcaster's management aware of the struggle between Jamie's "nutritious food" and the "junk food" of the programme sponsors and didn't care because the sponsor's money was "authentic"? Were the sponsors trying to deliberately confuse the viewers by having their "junk food" mixed in with Jamie's "nutritious food"? Whichever way you choose to look at it, authenticity took a big hit, as did credibility, integrity and honesty.

We, who are Christians, need to seek balance as we rove our critical eye. How much of a hit do our authenticity, credibility, integrity and honesty take when our roving critical eye focuses on these values. Most Christians would agree that the Sermon on the Mount is the "standout piece" of Jesus' preaching. When Jesus said, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" Matthew 7:12, was he was suggesting to us that we should not only try to see things from another's perspective but to evaluate what should be done if we were the other person?

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a story of compassion, generosity and sacrifice fulfilled by a cultural outcast, a Samaritan, and ignored by those who pretended to be "righteous", the priest and

the Levite. The Samaritan gave of his money and time in his effort to address the needs of an unknown in trouble, without any expectation of reward or repayment. He interrupted the "business" of his day to meet the desperate needs of a stranger. Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:37.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount also contains the famous challenge: "Love your enemies and pray for those who openly work against you." Matt 5:44. St Peter, chosen to be the first Pope and so to represent Jesus, echoes the challenge when he writes, "Do not repay evil with evil, or insult with insult, but with blessing, for this is why you are called." 1 Peter 3:9

So how does our roving critical eye see us in the light of the above three challenges? The Samaritan was the "real deal" or the "authentic person" – "The authentic self is the soul made visible." Sarah Breathnach. He was one in his thoughts, feelings and actions; he didn't simply know the right thing to do or simply think about it – he did it! "Go and do likewise."

What an impact Christians could make collectively, if we responded positively to Jesus' challenges. What an impact we, as individuals, can make within our family, workplace, school and neighbourhood. St Paul reminds us that the fruit of the Spirit is within us: "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Gal. 5:22. And to be an authentic person you will also need some "nutritious food!"

Peace and Best Wishes.