

# Fourth Sunday of the Year – February 3, 2019

Jeremiah 1: 4-5, 17-19 1 Corinthians 13: 4-13 Luke 4: 21-30

There may not be more appropriate passages from Scripture for us to hear today as we undertake in our Diocese the annual appeal for Catholic Charities. Our best understanding of the Scriptures that we hear at Mass is to hear them as God speaking to us today through inspired writers. This is the God of our Faith calling on us to hear an appeal being made to us to understand who and what we are and what we are to do as those who profess a firm belief and trust in Jesus Christ, God among us, on behalf of our world and our community.

The words we heard today from Saint Paul may be familiar and



often quoted. In a plain and straightforward way he addressed a community of believers who were divided into many factions: Jews and Greeks, rich and poor, slave and free. He reminded them in no uncertain terms, what it was to be a believer in Jesus Christ. He not

only declares that love, that charity, is what is to be most evident in how they were to live out their lives, he also spells out specifically, how that love, that charity was to be perceived and known. Love is known by patience and kindness. Love is not rude, nor jealous, nor self-seeking. Love gives evidence of hope and neither fails or falls short in what it can do. That community to which Paul was writing was to be different from those that were around it. We, too, need to be

different in so many of the values, so many of the attitudes, that are proclaimed around us today. Specifically, there is no clearer demonstration of what we can do and how we make that love, that charity, both active and present as a church and as a community that through support of our diocesan Catholic Charities Appeal.

Today, however, we not only have the words written by Saint Paul to consider, but also those words recorded as having been spoken by both Jeremiah and Jesus. Jeremiah laments that he has been called to be a prophet. He was to speak the truth about God's presence and about the response that is to be made to that presence. He knew, because he had experienced it, that he would face rejection and ridicule. But he was told to be strong and persistent in responding to his call to prophecy.

Jesus, we are told, was in his hometown. His neighbors and others thought they knew him. They felt that he should know his place and they wanted to remind him of this. He was to reveal to them, however, that his presence was beyond their prejudices and judgements. He sought to reveal to them that God's presence with them was far beyond their limited expectations,

We, too, are called to be prophets. We who are the Body of Christ in our world today are to announce by our words and, especially, by our actions the presence of God in our world. We are to announce by our words and actions how God is to be experienced in ways that are far beyond the expectations of so many. We are to announce how God is experienced through us in kindness, in patience, in home, in generosity.

Perhaps this is not easy. Perhaps this, too, can be subject to rejection and ridicule, doubt and skepticism. But, in Catholic Charities we have a concrete way of demonstrating the presence, the reality and, most especially, the faith and trust we place in a good and gracious God.