

I was watching a senior sergeant during the week helping a lady with a tiny infant on her shoulder, leave one of the hotels after being in isolation. It was a woman he did not know, but needed his help. There was a real sense of service that struck me, as the officer with real compassion carried the woman's belongings to a car. He then drove off with the woman who waved at me as she left. The whole event was fleeting but had an impact on me.

Three things struck me. The first is only guesswork on my part. But I wondered if the officer was Christian. I am not sure. I suspect he was a secular man probably not thinking much about Christ at all. I had already read the Gospel reading for this Sunday: "there are many rooms in my father's house." It is a passage that is often used at funerals. And I imagined this officer at his time of death saying to Christ in front of the gates of heaven:

*"When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? \_ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"* *"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"* And I suspect God will invite him to one of those many rooms prepared for him. Saying "I am sorry you were not aware of my support for you throughout your life. You tried so hard but missed out on my support because you did not believe in me. But believe now and be rewarded. Appreciate now what you have been searching for."

The Second thing that struck me was goodness has a rippling effect. The woman waved at me recognising I was wearing the same uniform as the officer. Goodness often multiplies itself.

Finally, I thought I have a gift of faith I do not deserve; how do I preserve and share this gift?

**Fr Paul O'Donoghue**