

## GOSPEL

LUKE 10:25-37

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What do you read there?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' 'You have answered right,' said Jesus. 'Do this and life is yours.'

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead.

Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them.

He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have."

Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him' he replied.

Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. The first commandment in this passage is Love of God, Neighbour and Self? What might this 'love' mean, as distinct from or rather than 'like', 'accept', 'tolerate', or 'admire'?
2. The neighbour is the person towards which we 'prove' ourselves to be 'neighbour'. It is easy to say 'everyone's my neighbour' but another thing to 'prove to be a neighbour'. It can mean going beyond rules and regulations into matters of the heart and compassion. How might Jesus be calling upon you to become a neighbour to him and his people?

## A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

Today's liturgy presents us with the parable of the "Good Samaritan", taken from the Gospel of Luke.

This passage, this simple and inspiring story, indicates a way of life, which has as its main point not ourselves, but others, with their difficulties, whom we encounter on our journey and who challenge us. Others challenge us. And when others do not challenge us, something is not right; something in the heart is not Christian.

Jesus uses this parable in his dialogue with a lawyer when asked about the twofold commandment that allows us to enter into eternal life: to love God with your whole heart and your neighbour as yourself. "Yes", the lawyer replies, "but, tell me, who is my neighbour?"

We too can ask ourselves this question: Who is my neighbour? Who must I love as myself? My parents? My friends? My fellow countrymen? Those who belong to my religion?... Who is my neighbour?

Jesus responds with this parable. A man, along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, was attacked, beaten and abandoned by robbers. Along that road, a priest passed by, then a Levite, and upon seeing this wounded man, they did not stop, but walked straight past him. Then a Samaritan came by, that is, a resident of Samaria, a man

who was therefore despised by the Jews because he did not practise the true religion; and yet he, upon seeing that poor wretched man, "had compassion. He went to him, bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn and took care of him"; and the next day he entrusted him to the care of the innkeeper, paid for him and said that he would pay for any further costs.

At this point, Jesus turns to the lawyer and asks him: "Which of these three — the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan — do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell victim to the robbers?" And the lawyer, of course — because he was intelligent —, said in reply: "The one who had compassion on him". In this way, Jesus completely overturned the lawyer's initial perspective — as well as our own!

I must not categorize others in order to decide who is my neighbour and who is not. It is up to me whether to be a neighbour or not — the decision is mine — it is up to me whether or not to be a neighbour to those whom I encounter who need help, even if they are strangers or perhaps hostile. And Jesus concludes, saying: "Go and do likewise".

What a great lesson! And he repeats it to each of us: "Go and do likewise", be a neighbour to the brother or sister whom you see in trouble. "Go and do likewise". Do good works, don't just say words that are gone with the wind. A song comes to mind: "Words, words, words". No. Works, works. And through the good works that we carry out with love and joy towards others, our faith emerges and bears fruit.

Let us ask ourselves — each of us responding in his own heart — let us ask ourselves: Is our faith fruitful? Does our faith produce good works? Or is it sterile instead, and therefore more dead than alive? Do I act as a neighbour or simply pass by? Am I one of those who selects people according to my own liking?

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It is good to ask ourselves these questions, and to ask them often, because in the end we will be judged on the works of mercy. The Lord will say to us: Do you remember that time on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho? That man who was half dead was me. Do you remember? That hungry child was me. Do you remember? That immigrant who many wanted to drive away, that was me. That grandparent who was alone, abandoned in nursing homes, that was me. That sick man, alone in the hospital, who no one visited, that was me.

May the Virgin Mary help us to walk along the path of love, love that is generous towards others, the way of the Good Samaritan. May she help us to live the first commandment that Christ left us. This is the way to enter into eternal life.

### **REFLECTION QUESTION**

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

### **PRAYER**

*Spend some time in prayer  
with one another*

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.