

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (Lk 10:25-37): There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

"A Samaritan was moved with compassion. He approached the victim. Then he lifted him up on his own animal"

Today, we might wonder: "And who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29). Some inquisitive Jews were wondering why their rabbi disappeared on Saturday vigils. They suspected he had a secret, maybe with God, and they entrusted someone to follow him. He did it until entering into a wretched slum. There he saw the rabbi cooking and sweeping at some woman's home: she was a paralytic, and the rabbi was serving her and preparing her some special meal for the festivity. When the spy came back, the Jews asked him: "Where did he go, to Heaven, amongst clouds and stars?" But the spy answered: "No! he climbed up much higher."

To love our neighbor with good deeds is the highest up we can climb; it is where true love is made manifest, not just passing by on the other side: In a document, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, asserts "Christ himself raises his voice amongst the poor so as to stir up his disciples' charity."

To be a good Samaritan means to change our plans: "He approached the victim", dedicating our time: "poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them"... Which allows us to contemplate the figure of the innkeeper, as Saint John Paul II pointed out: "What could the Samaritan have done without him? In fact, the innkeeper, remaining anonymous, is who takes care of the toughest part of the job. We can all act like him if we fulfill our own task with a spirit of service. Every occupation offers the more or less direct possibility to help the needy... The faithful accomplishment of our own professional duties already implies the practice of our loving all persons as well as our society."

To leave everything to harbor he who needs it —the good Samaritan— and to do our job well for love —the innkeeper—, are the two ways for us to love our neighbor: "Which was neighbor to the robbers' victim?'... 'The one who treated him with mercy' And Jesus said, 'Go and do likewise'" (Lk 10:36-37).

We turn to the Virgin Mary and She, who is a living example!, will help us discovering in our neighbors' material and spiritual needs.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“How great and admirable a thing charity is. Let us pray, then, and beg him that, by his mercy, he allows us to live in charity” (Saint Clement of Rome)

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“The name ‘Good Samaritan’ fits every individual who is sensitive to the sufferings of others, who ‘is moved’ by the misfortune of another. Therefore one must cultivate this sensitivity of heart, which bears witness to compassion towards a suffering person.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“When someone asks him, ‘Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?’ (Mt 22:36), Jesus replies: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets’ (Mt 22:37-40). The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of the Law” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2,055)