Monday of the Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time

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.”

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Fr. Ivan LEVYTSKYY CSsR
(Lviv, Ukraine)

Today the Gospel points us to the path of life: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart… and your neighbor as yourself” (Lk 10:27). And because God has first loved us, He draws us into union with Himself. St. Teresa of Calcutta once said: “We need this deep connection with God in our daily life. How can we obtain it? By prayer.” When we are united with God, we begin to experience that with Him all things are possible—even loving our neighbor.

Someone said that the Christian enters the church to love God and leaves it loving his neighbor. Benedict

XVI emphasized that the Christian's program—the program of the Good Samaritan, the program of Jesus—is "a heart which can see." To see and to stop! In the parable, two men see the wounded traveler, but they do not stop. This is why Christ rebuked the Pharisees, saying: "Do you have eyes and not see?" (Mk 8:18). The Samaritan, on the other hand, sees and stops, is moved with compassion, and in doing so saves the life of the wounded man—and, in a way, saves his own as well.

When the famous architect Antoni Gaudí was struck by a streetcar, passersby did not stop to help the injured old man. He carried no identification, and by his appearance he looked like a beggar. If people had known who that neighbor was, they surely would have lined up to assist him.

When we do good, we may think we are doing it only for our neighbor. But in truth, we are also doing it for Christ: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). And my neighbor, as Benedict XVI reminded us, is anyone in need whom I am able to help. If each of us, upon seeing a neighbor in need, were to stop and show compassion once a day—or even once a week—the world would be a better place. For "Nothing makes us resemble God more than good deeds" (St. Gregory of Nyssa).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "For ours is no trifling aim, but our endeavour is for eternal life." (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

- "In the messianic programme of Christ, which is at the same time the programme of the Kingdom of God, suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour." (Saint John Paul II)

- "(...) We cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: 'Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.' (1 Jn 3:15) (....)" (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1033)

Other comments

"The one who treated him with mercy."

Brother Lluís SERRA i Llançana
(Roma, Italy)

Today, a Teacher of the Law asks Jesus the kind of question we may have asked ourselves more than once, in our life: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 10:25). He wanted to put Jesus to the

test. The Master, though, wisely answers what is written in the Scriptures, that is, to love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself (cf. Lk 10:27). The key is to love. If we seek the eternal life, we know that faith and hope will go away, but love will remain forever (cf. 1Cor 13:13). Any life project, any spirituality, that does not have love in its center takes us further away from the actual meaning of our existence. An often forgotten but important reference point is to love oneself. Only from our personal identity can we love God and our neighbors.

The teacher of the Law goes still further when asking Jesus: “Who is my neighbor?” (Lk 10:29). And he gets his answer with a tale, a parable, a little story, far away from complicated theories, but with a clear message. The model of the loving person is a Samaritan, that is, someone who is a dropout, someone excluded from God's people. When they saw the man beaten and half-dead, a priest and a Levite just ignored him and passed by. Those who apparently are closer to God (the priest and the Levite) are those who are farther away from their neighbor. The teacher of the Law avoids saying the word “Samaritan” to state who did behave as neighbor to the wounded man: “The one who treated him with mercy” (Lk 10:37).

Jesus' proposal is clear: “Go and do likewise.” It is not a theoretical conclusion of the debate but an invitation to live the reality of love, which is not only an ethereal feeling but a behavior that overcomes social discrimination and arises from a person's heart. St. John of the Cross reminds us “at the twilight of your life you will only be examined of love.”