

Sunday Message

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 13 July 2025 • Psalter Week 3

EVERYBODY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS

LUKE 10:25-37



In today's Gospel a lawyer puts this question to Jesus: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replies: "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

It's not a quiz Jesus springs on him as a test but a question that has to do with the foundation of a well-lived Jewish life. The scholar replies by reciting a portion of the Shema, a prayer that remains a basic Jewish prayer to this day: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." Jesus tells the lawyer: "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

But the scholar, as scholars often do, wants to have the last word. He has a follow-up question: "And who is my neighbour?" His question results in one of the most famous of all Jesus' parables.

A traveller on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho is attacked, robbed and beaten up. The half-dead victim is passed by both a priest and Levite who appear to be going to the Temple. It is possible they pass him by because they consider him already dead and don't want to make themselves impure by touching him, which would leave them unable to serve in the Temple. Maybe they're worried that if the robbers beat one man to death, they might be looking for more victims. In any event, they ignore him.

Then along comes a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans despised each other. Imagine Ukrainian and Russian soldiers today, or a Palestinian and an Israeli settler. It is the despised Samaritan who puts aside all concerns for his own safety and acts out of compassion for the Jewish victim. He cleans him up, bandages him, puts him on his horse, takes him to an inn where he gives the innkeeper money out of his own pocket, and says: "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." The Samaritan not only opens his heart and his wallet, but leaves the equivalent of his credit card number behind. His actions say, "Put it on my account."

Who is the neighbour to the unfortunate traveller? The answer is obvious, and it must have been very difficult for Jesus' listeners to hear. The one who acted like a neighbour was the foreigner, the outsider, the enemy. In saying this, Jesus identified anyone in need as a neighbour.

Jesus tells the lawyer (and us): "Go and do the same yourself." ■

PRAY

Pray for people on the margins, those who are isolated and ignored, those who feel as if they are nobody's neighbour.

DO

In this era of populism and narrow nationalism, think about your attitude to the foreigner, the refugee, the stranger. Do you see them as your neighbour?

LEARN

The Christian treats every person as they really are.

Everybody is the same in God's eyes.

Our actions show the kind of people we are.

For the Christian, WE is more important than I.

SAY

"Lord, help me to welcome the stranger always. Amen."

REFLECT

The implications for us of today's Gospel couldn't be clearer. Christians cannot be rugged individualists, out merely for themselves. They never turn a blind eye to those in need. Christians always see beyond themselves.

Dr Martin Luther King spoke about the parable of the Good Samaritan the night before he was assassinated. He framed it in a beautiful way. He said: "The first question the priest asked, the first question the Levite asked, was, 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But then the Good Samaritan came by and turned the question around: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"

Christians see beyond themselves.

Today's parable reminds us that everyone is our neighbour. Not just those who live close by, or have the right post code, or share the same views on politics and religion – everyone is my neighbour.

It means I cannot be a Christian and a racist, or a bigot, or a homophobe, or be anti-Semitic; I cannot be a Christian and be contemptuous of anyone because of who they are, or how they look or dress or where they come from. Hard as it may be to digest sometimes, the fact is everyone is my neighbour.

That's why the Jews have set aside a special room in Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem, to honour those they call the Righteous of the Nations. The Righteous of the Nations were those ordinary people – more than twenty-eight thousand of them are listed – who went out of their way to protect their Jewish neighbours from the Nazis and their accomplices. Doing what they did was dangerous. If caught sheltering Jews, they risked imprisonment and death. Still, they did it anyway.

Many of their friends and neighbours would have considered these people to be crazy; their actions not very sensible. The wise thing would have been to look away, to mind their own business, to pass by on the other side, as so many people did in those dark years. Instead, they looked out for and protected their Jewish brothers and sisters. They were Good Samaritans. They saw beyond themselves.

Jesus tells us this is how we also must act. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.*

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path, give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honour. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 30:10-14

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy.

Moses spoke to the people: 'Obey the voice of the LORD your God, keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

'For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 69(68):14, 17, 30-31, 33-34.

36ab, 37. R. cf. 33.

R: Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

1. I pray to you, O LORD,
at an acceptable time.
In your great mercy, answer me, O God,
with your faithful salvation.
LORD, answer, for your mercy is kind;
in your great compassion, turn toward me. **R.**
2. As for me in my poverty and pain,
let your salvation, O God, raise me up.
Then I will praise God's name with a song;
I will glorify him with thanksgiving. **R.**
3. The poor when they see it will be glad,
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the LORD attends to the needy,
and does not spurn his own in their chains. **R.**
4. For God will bring salvation to Sion,
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
The children of his servants shall inherit it;
those who love his name shall dwell there. **R.**

Or Psalm 19(18):8, 9, 10, 11. R.9a

**R: The precepts of the LORD are right;
they gladden the heart.**

1. The law of the LORD is perfect;
it revives the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are steadfast;
they give wisdom to the simple. **R.**
2. The precepts of the LORD are right;
they gladden the heart.
The command of the LORD is clear;
it gives light to the eyes. **R.**
3. The fear of the LORD is pure,
abiding for ever.
The judgements of the LORD are true;
they are, all of them, just. **R.**

4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than quantities of gold.
And sweeter are they than honey,
than honey flowing from the comb. **R.**

SECOND READING Colossians 1:15-20

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians. Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL cf. John 6:63c, 68c

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Your words, O Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of eternal life.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Luke 10:25-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

At that time: Behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How do you read it?' And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.'

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.'

And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' And Jesus said to him, 'You go, and do likewise.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord, as she makes her prayer to you, and grant that, when consumed by those who believe, they may bring ever greater holiness. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.*

Or

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord, that, by our participation in this mystery, its saving effects upon us may grow. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**