

FAITH BOOK: Mini-reflections on the Sunday scripture readings designed for persons on the run.

From today's Gospel reading:

But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.

Reflection:

The Samaritan would have known from his own experience what it felt like to be "beaten up" and left behind. His was a member of a despised group, an outsider to the religious and national thinking of the Jew. Which may have stirred him to respond to the victim by the side of the road. He knew what it was like to be victimized.

So, we ask ourselves:

- Can we remember an experience of being left out, treated as an outsider?
- Does that experience make us more aware and sensitive to the plight of outsiders these days? Who are these outsiders?

*Jude Siciliano, OP,
Southern Dominican Province, USA*



It must have been an outrage to the Jewish authorities to hear that a despised Samaritan was being held up as a role model, rather than a priest or a Levite. Levites were members of the tribe of Levi, and their primary role was to serve as assistants to the priests in religious rituals and Temple services. They were responsible for tasks like maintaining the temple, singing during services, and

keeping watch over the Tabernacle. Jesus was saying that the entire religious leadership of his day was morally bankrupt.

- Lord, help me always to help others when they need it, no matter what their religious background. Protect me from moral bankruptcy.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East and for that of Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City.

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The Loving Neighbour

The parable of the Good Samaritan built upon Jesus' commissioning monologue from last week. Jesus sent seventy missionaries before him with travel instructions. On their return, they glowed about the power of Jesus' name. And he praised God for his revelation to the disciples.

Suddenly, the scene shifted. A lawyer (read "scribe") stood up in the midst of the followers to challenge Jesus. He wanted to know about duties necessary for salvation. "Love God" was the easy part. "Love neighbour" was more controversial. After all, who was "neighbour," a fellow Jew or a complete stranger? Jesus answered with a parable of dangers on the road. And changed the identity of the neighbour.

*Larry Broding
word-sunday.com*

People often puzzle over what motivates a person to act as the Samaritan did. An important clue as to how such an action is possible emerges when we take into account how the first hearers of Jesus' story would have responded to it. Usually when Christians retell the parable we hear the story as one that advises us to act as the Samaritan did. The point appears to be: do good to your neighbour, even if the one in need is a hated enemy. But the original audience for Jesus' story would have been Jews, presumably Galilean peasants. And in the narrative the one to whom the story is directed is a Jewish scholar of the law. No Jew who enters into this story would have identified with the hated Samaritan. The character with whom a lay audience would have identified would be the man victimized by the robbers and left for dead. It is from this "view from the ditch" that the parable invites one to see a hated enemy as the merciful face of God. The parable advances that for some it is only possible to accept this message after having reached the depths of need, having been stripped of all of one's own resources. Accepting godly mercy from one once regarded as a hated enemy opens the wellsprings of compassion so that one may come to regard every person as neighbour and in turn be a doer of mercy across boundaries.

Barbara E. Reid

Parables for Preachers: Year C



Who is my neighbour?

I had the most extraordinary experience of love of neighbour with a Hindu family. A gentleman came to our house and said: "Mother Teresa, there is a family who have not eaten for so long. Do something." So I took some rice and went there immediately. And I saw the children - their eyes shining with hunger. I don't know if you have ever seen hunger. But I have seen it very often. And the mother of the family took the rice I gave her and went out. When she came back, I asked her: "Where did you go? What did you do?" And she gave me a very simple answer: "They are hungry also." What struck me was that she knew - and who are they? A Muslim family - and she knew. ...

Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods.

Abraham Joshua Heschel



Suppose we were to...draw the outline of a circle.... Let us suppose that this circle is the world, and that God is the centre; the straight lines drawn from the circumference are the lives of people.... The closer those lines are to God, the closer they become to one another; and

the closer they are to one another,
the closer they become to God.

Dorotheos of Gaza, 6thC



Monastic Wisdom

Christ

Christ, whose heart of love is the centre and binding agent of the whole cosmos, is the one in whom the soul discovers the true measure of its wingspan.

Br. Keith Nelson, SSJE

Renew

Today is another day to push forward, to renew the promises we have made, to recommit ourselves to the life and work of a disciple, and to lean wholly on the power of God's Spirit, who strengthens us for the battle. Humbly but courageously, we press on.

Br. David Vryhof, SSJE

Gifts

Who are you? Maybe you're a farmer, or a banker, or a teacher. Maybe you also sing, or love the outdoors, or foster puppies, or juggle. Any number of factors make you the you created by God, gifted by God to be a singular part of Christ's Body. You are invited to live into your gifts, to own your giftedness, and to offer that back to God in thanks and praise.

Br. Lain Wilson, SSJE



Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smaller right and doing it all for love.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux



People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their beauty is revealed only if there is a light, from *within*.

Helen Kubler-Ross



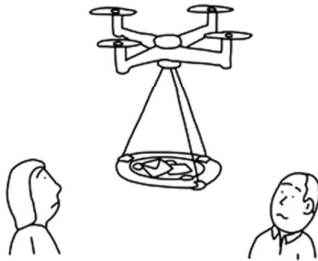
**TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY AS IF
YOU WERE GOING TO LIVE
FOREVER, AND TAKE CARE OF
YOUR SOUL AS IF YOU WERE
GOING TO DIE TOMORROW.**

St Augustine

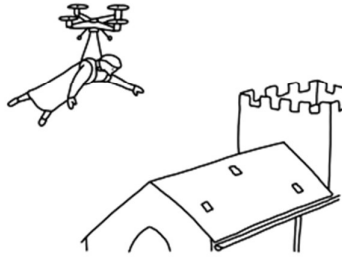


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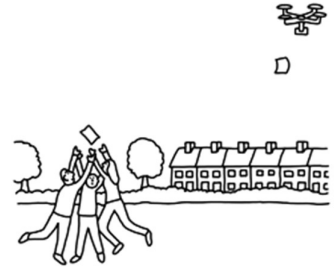
ECCLESIASTICAL USES



TAKING UP THE
COLLECTION



SURVEYING THE
CHURCH ROOF



DELIVERING NEWSLETTERS
AROUND THE PARISH



CHECKING UP ON
THE NEIGHBOURS



PUTTING THE STAR ON THE
CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE



SEARCH AND
RESCUE