



WHOSE NEIGHBOUR ARE YOU? (LUKE 10:25-37)

In today's Gospel extract, we hear of a hostile encounter between a lawyer, who obviously wants to catch Jesus out on a point of law, and Jesus himself. Jesus sidesteps the trap of being lured into a legalistic debate on theoretical questions by getting straight to the heart of the matter: what is the moral value at stake here?

Jesus answers his interrogator by placing love of one's neighbour as equivalent to one's love of God. Love, in the Bible, does not refer to an emotional attachment, but has more the sense of proper treatment, respect, concern. Jesus' illustration by the parable of the Good Samaritan is an exquisite treatment of this theme. We are, in our reading of today's Gospel during Mass, in Samaria, a region in which the hostility towards Jesus and other pilgrims to Jerusalem would be particularly acute. Hence, Jesus' reference to official religious figures is especially critical: the wounded individual may be dead, therefore to approach his corpse rendered anyone who approached it ritually impure and therefore excluded from public worship and community activities.

The person who shows human, and religious, compassion for the injured person, whom the others may not realise to be still alive, is one of the most despised groups in cultural Jewish thought at the time.

Jesus turns the lawyer's question back on him. His questioner asks, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus is posing the question the opposite way round: "Whose neighbour are you?" ■

LEARN

Jesus is not concerned about the finer points or academic point of the Law.

Jesus concentrates on the values which the Law seeks to promote.

To present a Samaritan as the hero of the parable instead of the priest or the Levite would have profoundly shocked the readers of the Gospel.

The poor and those on the margins of social and religious society were people of particular concern to Jesus in Luke's version of the Gospel.

DO

Find out who in your community is in need: they are your neighbour, and you are theirs.



SAY

You must love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself.

(Luke 10:27)

REFLECT

A parish priest once went into his local primary school. A little girl stood up to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan, but became stuck at a particular part of the tale. She kept repeating, "The priest passed by... the priest passed by." Eventually the parish priest interrupted and said, "All right: don't rub it in!"

It is perhaps worth reflecting for a little on the characters in our Gospel reading today. The priest and the Levite are very much figures from the religious

establishment of their time. In their way of thinking, they cannot approach the figure lying at the side of the road: if he is dead, then they are, in their turn, contaminated and unable to carry out their responsibilities according to the Law, which is uppermost in their understanding of their religious duties.

On the other hand, the priest and Levite would regard the Samaritan as a heretic. But Jesus is saying that he, out of the three of them, understood better what the Law was actually

teaching. Theoretically, the priest and Levite were acting correctly; but Jesus is saying: "What is more important: the letter of the Law or the person lying injured by the side of the road?" The despised Samaritan has got it right and understood God's teaching.

Many Christians are obsessed with the rights and wrongs of the finer details of church doctrine and liturgy rather than the values which these present. Perhaps we all need to be more like the Samaritan. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

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...
Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 30:10-14

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.
Moses said to the people: "Obey the
voice of the Lord your God, keeping those
commandments and laws of his that are
written in the Book of this Law, and you shall
return to the Lord your God with all your heart
and soul.

"For this Law that I enjoin on you today
is not beyond your strength or beyond your
reach. It is not in heaven, so that you need to
wonder, 'Who will go up to heaven for us and
bring it down to us, so that we may hear it and
keep it?' Nor is it beyond the seas, so that you
need to wonder, 'Who will cross the seas for us
and bring it back to us, so that we may hear it
and keep it?' No, the Word is very near to you,
it is in your mouth and in your heart for your
observance."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 68

Response:

Seek the Lord, you who are poor,
and your hearts will revive.

- This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me. (R.)
- As for me in my poverty and pain
let your help, O God, lift me up.
I will praise God's name with a song;
I will glorify him with thanksgiving. (R.)

- The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their
chains. (R.)
- For God will bring help to Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
The sons of his servants shall inherit it;
those who love his name shall dwell
there. (R.)

SECOND READING Colossians 1:15-20

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Colossians.

Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God
and the first-born of all creation,
for in him were created
all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers –
all things were created through him and for him.
Before anything was created, he existed,
and he holds all things in unity.
Now the Church is his body,
he is its head.
As he is the Beginning,
he was first to be born from the dead,
so that he should be first in every way;
because God wanted all perfection
to be found in him
and all things to be reconciled through him
and for him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
when he made peace
by his death on the cross.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The sheep that belong to me listen to my
voice, says the Lord,
I know them and they follow me.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 10:25-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

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.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.

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.