

Homily, 15th Sunday, Year C 7/14/19

...**Go and do the same**

Do you have any personal good Samaritan experience, where you were either the one needing help or you were the one giving the help? Do you have a story where you walked past someone that you felt you could reach out to? Our gospel reading today is the story of the good Samaritan. It is a story of how one human being helped another. Several Christian preachers will be using that passage of scripture this weekend and yet our world is getting toxic all the time. Day in and out, fresh lines of separation are drawn to differentiate one set of human beings from another in order to deny the basics of human love.

Jesus tells the story of the good Samaritan in response to a scholar of the law who came to test him about what to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answer was 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself'. He asked Jesus again 'and who is my neighbor?'

Jesus tells the story of the good Samaritan to show him who is a neighbor. In the story, there is a man in need; he is fighting for his life and yet a priest walks by the other side of the road and offers no help; a Levite walks the other side of the road and goes his way as well. The third person, the Samaritan traveler catches sight of a human being by the side of the road and goes to his aid. Let's look at the stages he goes through to help

1. He observes-he sees something unusual that needs attention.
2. He is moved to compassion at what he sees in front of him
3. He makes a move
4. He applies himself to the problem to bring relief

To be able to do what he did, he needed to overcome several obstacles. He needed to confront all his biases and excuses such as:

1. Fear (What about if he is fake, if this whole thing is a set-up?)
2. Prejudice (the victim is a Jew, and I am a Samaritan, there is bad blood between the two groups). Or maybe he is a bad guy who is paying the price for his deeds.

3. Convenience and personal comfort (what if my animal gets soaked in blood, how do I continue my journey with dirty clothes?).

There are always 1001 reasons to avoid helping others just as there are enough reasons to help them.

What is Jesus saying to us today?

1. Jesus says we must not lose our sense of vision or sight (the ability to see).
2. He is urging us not to lose our capacity to feel (to have compassion).
3. Jesus reminds us that it is not enough to see and to feel, we must be courageous enough to act. (Make a move, give a hand, dare to be human).

Are we ready to do the same? Are you looking for where to start? Think of members of your family, Church family, place of work, the community in which you live.

A simple resolution today

Change your question from 'do you need help?' You may ask instead, 'how may I help?'