**“Love of All People”**

Today’s parable, probably after the parable of the prodigal son, is among the best known of the parables preached by Jesus. It speaks to us of the importance of how we should love everyone, rich or poor lame or blind. In this parable, Jesus wished to show us that no one, even our enemies should be excluded from our love.

On reflecting on the parable, we see Jesus as the Good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite were impostor shepherds. The Jew who was beaten to pulp by the rubbers represents all of human race. We are the ones on the journey of life that the Devil and his demons who are the rubbers are attacking daily. As St. Paul puts it, our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities.

The Devil and his demons rob us of our friendship with God. Through sin, we lay along the roadside stripped, beaten, and half-dead. Out of love for us, Jesus comes along to our rescue by His incarnation. He saw us lying alone by the roadside absolutely unable to help ourselves.

Jesus picks us up, embraces us, dresses our wounds, and bring us to the Inn, the Church ***“The field hospital”*** as Pope Francis would say. The price He paid so our wounds will be healed was more than the two pieces of silver mentioned in the parable. It is by shedding His precious blood, that Jesus restores us to life with His Father. He came into the world to save us and that is why we call Him, our savior.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the message of Jesus is to love all people even if others find them repulsive. You see, Jews and Samaritans did not love each other. If you remember a couple of weeks ago in our Gospel reading, Jesus was not allowed to pass through a Samaritan town because He was heading towards Jerusalem. That was how much they did not like each other.

By Jesus telling a Jew, the Scholar that it was only a Samaritan who stopped to help a Jew while other Jews the priest and the Levite left him to die, the message to love all people got through to the Scholar. He admitted that it was the Samaritan who was a neighbor to the victim of the robbers. He would forever remember the parable and how small minded he had been before meeting Jesus.

Loving all people by desiring heaven for them is what Jesus did on the cross. We are expected to be like Jesus, who opened His arms on the cross to embrace all peoples of all times and places. We are called to imitate His sacrifice of love. That is why, the greatest love is to desire heaven for all people.

In the end, we will not be judged by how much we give. But, we will be judged by whether our gifts reflect our livelihood, our whole being, all our heart, soul, mind and strength. As Scripture says, we cannot truly love God if we do not love all of His people.

In her writing, Dorothy Day had this to say about love: ***“It was human love that helped me to understand divine love. Human love at its best, unselfish, glowing, illuminating our days, gives us a glimpse of the love of God for man. Love is the best thing we can know in this life, but it must be sustained by an effort of the will. It must lie still and quiet, dull and smoldering, for periods. It grows through suffering and patience and compassion. We must suffer for those we love, we must endure their trials and their sins. Thus we learn to understand the love of God for His creatures. Thus we understand the crucifixion.”***

When we reflect on our life today, do we have other loves that gets in the way of our love for God? Do we love others as Jesus loved us? Do we love our enemies and pray for those who oppose and persecute us?

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask God in His mercy, to initiate a love in our hearts that is genuine, unmarred by any human desire.