

Reading 1: Deut 30:10-14

Responsorial Psalm : Ps 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37 or Ps

Reading 2: Col 1:15-20

Gospel : Lk 10:25-37

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**Scripture:** 25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" 27 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 neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 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. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, 34 and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 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.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

**Meditation:** For the Jewish believer the law of love was plain and simple: "treat your neighbor as you would treat yourself." The real issue for this believer was the correct definition of who is "my neighbor". He understood "neighbor" to mean one's fellow Jew who belonged to the same covenant which God made with the people of Israel. Up to a certain point, Jesus agreed with this sincere expert but, at the same time, he challenged him to see that God's view of neighbor went far beyond his narrow definition.

Jesus told a parable to show how wide God's love and mercy is towards every fellow human being. Jesus' story of a brutal highway robbery was all too familiar to his audience. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho went through a narrow winding valley surrounded by steep rocky cliffs. Many wealthy Jews from Jerusalem had winter homes in Jericho. This narrow highway was dangerous and notorious for its robbers who could easily ambush their victim and escape into the hills. No one in his right mind would think of traveling through this dangerous highway alone. It was far safer to travel with others for protection and defense.

So why did the religious leaders refuse to give any help when they saw a half-dead victim lying by the roadside? Didn't they recognize that this victim was their neighbor? And why did a Samaritan, an outsider who was despised by the Jews, treat this victim with special care at his own expense as he would care for his own family? Who was the real neighbor who showed brotherly compassion and mercy? Jesus makes the supposed villain, the despised Samaritan, the merciful one as an example for the status conscious Jews. Why didn't the priest and Levite stop to help? The priest probably didn't want to risk the possibility of ritual impurity. His piety got in the way of charity. The Levite approached close to the victim, but stopped short of actually helping him. Perhaps he feared that bandits were using a decoy to ambush him. The Levite put personal safety ahead of saving his neighbor.

God's love is unconditional. So we must be ready to do good to others for their sake, just as God is good to us. Jesus not only taught God's way of love, but he showed how far God was willing to go to share in our suffering and to restore us to wholeness of life and happiness. Jesus overcame sin, suffering, and death through his victory on the cross. His death brought us freedom from slavery to sin and the promise of everlasting life with God. He willingly shared in our suffering to bring us to the source of true healing and freedom from sin and oppression. True compassion not only identifies and empathizes with the one who is in pain, but takes that pain on oneself in order to bring freedom and restoration. Jesus truly identified with our plight, and he took the burden of our sinful condition upon himself. Are you ready to embrace the cross of Christ, to suffer for his sake, and to lay down your life out of love for your neighbor?

<http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/jul11.htm>

### Questions for community faith sharing:

1. Is there anyone you have walked away from when you saw them in pain because you didn't want to give up something?
2. What does Jesus' story tell us about love for one's neighbor?

How much do you love God? How much are you willing to sacrifice for a stranger because of your love for God our Father?

"Lord Jesus, may your love always be the foundation of my life. Free me from every fear and selfish-concern that I may freely give myself in loving service to others, even to the point of laying my life down for their sake."