



Fifteenth Sunday Ordinary Time – Year C

Deut. 30: 10-14 Colossians 1:15-20 Luke 10: 25-37

Today's Gospel story is so well known that the term, Good Samaritan is used in ordinary conversation.

Because we all know the bones of the story fairly well we may be in danger of thinking that there's not much more to be said.

A traveller gets into difficulties and someone comes to his rescue. Well, not quite.

Jesus was speaking to a group when a lawyer posed a question. "Teacher," he said, "What must I do to be a Godly person?"

Now this lawyer was an expert in Jewish law and he knew that Jesus had no qualifications in the subject, so his question wasn't very genuine. Jesus answered with a question. "What does the law say?"

Jesus heard the fellow recite the answer and seeing that the lawyer called him Teacher he answered like a teacher. "Correct, now go and live it."

The man was embarrassed so he tried to justify himself with another question. "Who is my neighbour?"

Such a question can only be answered by a story.

Instead of retelling the story let us look at a change of location. Pick a stretch of road that is dangerous. It could be inner-city, it could be a country road near a petrol station. A person is attacked. The injured person is left alone. Now you happen along. You rush to help. We all hope we would in such circumstances. The person is bleeding. Now the questions start. What if they have AIDS. It could be that girl you know who's been working as a prostitute in the city. It could be that man just out of gaol who might have got what he deserved.

These are dramatic examples that we might never come across. What about some other situations, in the workplace, in our neighbourhood?

We are more likely to meet the verbally abused, the people whom society puts on the "not nice" list.

When did we last see someone who could have done with a hand, or who asked for help and we were too busy-

It only encourages them.

I only give to worthwhile causes.

When has anyone done anything for me?

There are Social Services for that kind of thing.

They are not our sort.

and so the list goes on.

The Samaritan, we're told, went out of his way. That's what Jesus asks of us. To go out of *our way* and on to *his way*.

Our society is moving towards ways of acting that hurt more people. We are members of this society so we cannot pretend that it's got nothing to do with us. When we are threatened we are tempted to just look out for ourselves. Jesus saw this in his time and that's why he had so much to say about the kind of leadership in his community.

Today's gospel is one of the most challenging to our self-centred way of being, whether the "self" is me, my family, my community, or my religion. As we read in the ancient scriptures this commandment to love is not something airy-fairy, pie-in-the-sky thing .

So who gets our love and compassion?

If we can say everyone, everything, then not only are we good neighbours but we are the beloved of God.

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