

For Sunday, July 10, 2016

Just How Good Was the Good Samaritan?

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/071016.cfm>

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Colossians 1:15-20

Luke 10:25-37

Go ahead and perform a Google search for news stories about Good Samaritans. You will find a wide range of stories about people doing all sorts of kind acts:

- [Good Samaritan returns wallet containing over \\$200 to police.](#)
- [Good Samaritan talks about rescuing boy from Lake Sacajawea.](#)
- [Mother thanks Good Samaritan for stopping dog attack.](#)



The term is so widely and commonly used, it is at the point where a person performing any act of kindness whatsoever is labeled a Good Samaritan. I love reading and hearing all these stories about good deeds, but most don't really tell the story of a Good Samaritan. When Jesus told the parable, he was talking about more than just a good deed.

In fact, the parable was intended to provoke and cause discomfort and was not intended to be a feel-good story. He told the story about a traveler who suffered through great violence, to the point it was obvious to anyone passing by how badly he needed assistance. It was then the very people who spoke of holiness and devoted themselves to God that chose to pass by the beaten man without stopping. Would they be attacked also? If the man were to die, would they then be made unclean? Was this man worthy of their time and effort?

It was a Samaritan, despised by those listening to the parable, who risked his life and made himself vulnerable in order to stop and do the right thing. Unlike the nice guy who may get your cat out of the tree or the young lady who may return a found wallet to police, most listening to this tale did not think about Jesus' Good Samaritan, "What a wonderful man!" Instead, they got the message loud and clear: It isn't the one that speaks about love of thy neighbor that is righteous, but the one who actually acts out of love of that neighbor.

I am not saying the good deeds reported in the news are not worthy of mention. I think these good people serve as great examples to us all. But these are not stories of enemies suddenly becoming friends, and honestly, shouldn't we all be able to perform many of these acts at any time without much thought? It is more about being decent human beings than being disciples of Jesus Christ.

The parable Jesus told also has more to it than just a single act. In terms of stewardship catechesis, the Samaritan does something that is above and beyond the call. After taking the attacked man to an inn, he offers to pay any expense for the man's stay when he passes through again. The Samaritan has risked much already, has gone to the trouble of not only stopping but carrying the man to an inn, and now he states that whatever the cost, he will pay it. Imagine him walking into the inn, a place where perhaps his kind was not welcome. Here he could be taken advantage off, or much worse. Who is to say that the innkeeper would not then double the price due to the Samaritan's generosity?

The first conviction of the US Bishops' pastoral letter, [*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*](#), is labeled The Challenge, and it says we are called to be mature disciples that answer the call of Jesus Christ, regardless of the cost. To be a true disciple of Jesus means that there are no limits to our generosity. Yes, many days the call of Jesus will require a little bit of you and me. We won't have to dig deep and give that which hurts. But some days, it will require seemingly everything we have been given. We will be asked to risk it all, to maybe even put ourselves in danger. But maturity in faith means that we will have the courage to say yes to the call.

Yes, life is made so much better when more and more people decide to do random acts of kindness or good deeds for their fellow brothers and sisters. But these things may also be seen as dress rehearsals for when the real call comes to lay it all on the line. Will it be to give your life for another or for your country? Will it be to give the gift of life in some way? Will it be to give of your finances until sacrifice becomes a daily reality? When that time comes, call to mind the Good Samaritan in the parable. He was more than a nice guy. It is going to take more than a kind demeanor for you to respond positively. It is going to take an awesome faith and trust in a power much greater than yourself.

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

PRAYER

O my God,
I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul,
because you are all good and worthy of all my love.
I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you.
I forgive all who have injured me
and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured.
Amen.

—Act of Love, traditional

NOTICES

WORLD YOUTH DAY, Krakow, July 25-31, 2016

Last-minute registration for World Youth Day 2016 will be open until July 22 at <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/>. You can also find more information and resources from the USCCB [here](#).

YEAR OF MERCY COVER ART FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY

LPI is making free bulletin cover art available to celebrate the Special Jubilee Days for Youth of the Holy Year of Mercy. The art is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded from the [LPI Art & Media Portal](#).

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE, October 2-5, 2016

Discounted Early Bird registration for the International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) annual conference is only available until July 31. This year's conference will be held in New Orleans from October 2-5 at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. For more information on the conference and to register, click [here](#).

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