

15th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C
(Deuteronomy 30:10-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37)

Excerpts of Pope Francis – *Angelus* - 10 July 2022

by Father Charles Fillion
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Brothers and sisters, we all know very well today's Gospel. One question we might ask is why the priest simply passed by and did not stop. Because the priest did not want to become impure by touching the man who had been beaten badly. A Levite is not a priest, but someone who performed services in the temple. So, his reasoning would be the same as the priest.

Now the Samaritan did care about what the Law permits him to do or not. He could have done the same as the others. The Gospel makes a point to specify that this Samaritan *was on a journey*. So, even though he had his own plans and was heading towards a distant destination, this Samaritan does not come up with an excuse but allows himself to get involved.

Now I'll make a little adjustment to the Gospel. It says the Samaritan "was moved with **pity**." I don't like that word. In fact, the word we use now is compassion. Pity does not move us to do something. It's more like regret or disappointment. Compassion literally means "to suffer together." It is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another person's suffering and are concerned and feel motivated to help.

This is what God feels every time he sees us **in** a problem, **in** sin, **in** misery. "He had compassion" on him. Isn't the Lord teaching us to do just that? We are called to pay close attention to the steps to take here and now.

It is significant that the first Christians were called "*disciples of the Way*" (cf. *Acts* 9:2), that is, of the journey. In fact, believers strongly resemble the Samaritan — like him, the believer is on a journey. We are reminded this Jubilee Year that we are ***Pilgrims of Hope***. Believers know they have **not** "arrived", but they want to learn each day, following the Lord Jesus who said: "I am the *way*, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6). The disciple of Christ walks along following Him and therefore becomes a "disciple of the Way". He or she follows the Lord, who is not idle but is always on the way. Along the way, he meets people, heals the sick, visits villages and cities. This is what the Lord did, he was always on the move.

The "disciple of the Way" — that is, we Christians — observes, therefore, that his or her way of thinking and of acting gradually changes, becoming more and more conformed to that of the Master. Walking in Christ's footsteps, the disciple becomes a pilgrim and — like the Samaritan — learns *to see* and *to have compassion*. He sees and has compassion on him.

First of all, *to see*: his eyes are open to reality, not boastfully closed in on the circle of his own thoughts. Instead, the priest and the Levite see the unfortunate man, but they pass by as if they do not see him, they look the other way.

The Gospel teaches us to **see** — it leads each of us to correctly understand reality, overcoming preconceptions and strictness each day. So many believers take refuge behind what is rigid to defend themselves from reality. The Gospel teaches us to follow Jesus, because following Jesus teaches us *to have compassion* — to become aware of others, especially those who suffer, those who are most in need, and to intervene like the Samaritan, not to pass by but to stop, and to help.

It can happen that we might blame others or blame ourselves, pointing fingers at others, comparing them to the priest or the Levite — “This person, that person goes on, that one doesn’t stop...” — or even to blame ourselves, counting our own failures to pay attention to our neighbours. But I would like to suggest another type of exercise to you all, not one that finds fault, no. Certainly, we must recognise when we have been indifferent and have justified ourselves. But let us not stop there. We must acknowledge that it is a mistake.

Let us ask the Lord to help us overcome our selfish indifference and put ourselves on the Way. Let us ask him *to see* and *to have compassion*. This is a grace we need to ask **of** the Lord: “Lord, that I might **see**, that I might have **compassion** just like you see me and have compassion on me”. This is the prayer that I suggest to you today. “Lord, that I might see and have compassion just like you see me and have compassion on me” — that we might have compassion on those whom we encounter along the way, above all on those who suffer and are in need, to draw near to them **and do what we can do** to give them a hand.

Pope Francis gave a good example of how we should be compassionate. When you give alms, do you touch the hand of the person you give the money to? Do you just throw it to the person? Do you look into the eyes of that person? If you give alms without touching the reality, without looking into the eyes of the person in need, those alms **are for you**, not for that person.

Think about this. Do I touch poverty, even the poverty that I am helping? Do I look into the eyes of the people who suffer, of the people that I help? May we see **and** have compassion on this journey of growth so to become ever more “disciples of the Way”.