

Monday 5 October 2020

Today is Monday the 5 October, in the twenty-seventh week of Ordinary Time.

Madison Cunningham with the Porter's Gate sings, 'Little Things with Great Love.'

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 10:29-37

When a lawyer asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

When you hear this story, which character do you identify with? The unfortunate victim? The Samaritan, the despised outsider? The priest or the Levite? Perhaps the lawyer who asks Jesus this question? Which role can you imagine yourself playing?

The lawyer asks Jesus: "Who is my neighbour?" He wants a definition from Jesus, a nice, clear limit, a boundary, so he knows which people are his neighbours and which are not, which people he has to love, and which he can ignore. Do you ever notice that same desire in yourself?

As you hear the passage read again, listen for the subtle shift from the lawyer's question "who is my neighbour?" to Jesus's question "who was a neighbour?"

Perhaps that shift from a concern for limits and boundaries to a more generous, open-hearted care for others – whoever they are – is one that needs to take place in my heart, too. Jesus invites me to "go and do likewise": so, can I ask him now to show me how? – to show me who needs me to be a neighbour to them today?

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.