

FR.TK.REFLECTIONS 15th SUNDAY YEAR C-2022:

THE GOOD SAMARITAN:

The book of Deuteronomy is a series of sermons delivered by Moses to the Israelites before entry into the promised land.

In the first reading today, Moses is very much aware that he won't be with them as they enter the promised land, hence he is giving them words of wisdom on how they must keep the commandments of Yahweh. He is calling on them to make the choice between **good and evil, a decision whether to worship God or other gods, and to love God and their Neighbor**. What they do will warrant them either a **blessing or a Curse**. These commandments are no longer written just on tablets on the outside, they are now **written in their hearts**.

We too are given this same choice today, as we reflect on the gospel reading of the Good Samaritan. What God wants of us is within all of us, it is not an issue of just **living up to something on the outside, but a standard within our own hearts**.

The story of the Good Samaritan gives us a name for all those people who step **forward and volunteer to help others**. **There are so many** of them around us, there is no doubt about that, most of you in this very Church and other places have been Good Samaritans in one way or another too, or witnessed their kindness.

Perhaps one helped you to **jumpstart your car, or gave you directions when you were lost, gave you a hand carrying a burden, or a shoulder to lean on during the hour of need**. Perhaps you were the Good Samaritan that stopped driving, going off the path that was planned, to **the other side of the road**, to help someone stranded.

Today our Lord is calling us to stick our neck out to the other side, to take a risk, **to reach the person in need**...sometimes this means being

misunderstood, hurt, used, or even taken advantage of... all at the cost of reaching out to a neighbor (as God's hands, part of His living body).

We too sometimes ask questions just as the Scholar asked Jesus, "***then who is my Neighbor***"?

This is anyone who is in **need, even one whom we despise**. There are so many neighbors and opportunities of being good Samaritans in our present lives and society. Most of the time when the call of this gospel becomes **concrete, specific, personal, living, breathing, and local to us, we are tempted** to pass the opportunity, remaining on the other side...**closing our eyes, ears, and hearts to a particular environment...**just like the priest and the Levite.

When there is a need in our path we perhaps go on vacation to distance ourselves until the storm passes by. Perhaps we think yes, I am ready to help and contribute towards the Church, but not with this Pope, not with this Bishop, not with this priest, not with this lay person present! Yet the Neighbor is that exact person who is there at that exact moment...that husband, wife, child, family, neighborhood, parish, or even the stranger needing help. That particular son/daughter who is under the influence of **drugs, alcohol, sickness, homelessness, are these not people in need? Don't they need extra attention? Have they not met bandits on the road to Jericho in their life's journey? Surely we need to pour a bit of oil on their forehead, give them a bit of wine to drink, and bandage their wounds, with encouraging words and loving actions, extending our hearts with compassion.** We are called today to be Good Samaritans to all those in need.

Be a Good Samaritan today to the needy person that you see, that is in your path, don't look the other way and pass by...they need you.

The test of Christian love for our Neighbor is not found on pilgrimages to Italy, shrines to Our Virgin of Guadalupe, the image of Our Lady of Fatima and Lourdes, or reading great Catholic classic literature... rather it is found in **what we do to that person on the other side of the road who need you care, love, and attention. (It is found bursting forth from within our hearts like a spring of living water).**

The parable of the Good Samaritan applies to **all of us, at all times, and in all places.** It calls on us to **stop precisely where we are at, and to make a decision, either helping someone or passing by the other way.** ***There are these three characters in the Gospel parable , a priest, a Levite, and the Samaritan... who proved to be the Neighbor? (*Interesting to note that the Jews greatly despised the Samaritans for being “half-breeds” and not pure on the outside.)***

Christ is telling us now: GO OUT AND DO THE SAME JUST LIKE THE SAMARITAN... WHICH ONE OF THE THREE WILL YOU FOLLOW TODAY?!!

Christ is the Good Samaritan per excellence at all times. He came **binding our wounds on the path, rescuing us from sin on the journey, and conquering death...bringing us into far more than the physical Promised Land on earth, and leading us into the Promised Kingdom of Heaven, to share with Him in ETERNAL LIFE.**

