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Monday's Gospel: Loving as God Loves

Gospel for Monday of the 27th
Week in Ordinary Time, with
commentary.

Gospel (Lk 10:25-37)

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your

strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

And he said to him, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live.”

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, 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, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own

beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii^[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’

Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed mercy on him.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

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Commentary

Luke tells us that a doctor of the Law – the texts say a “lawyer” – addressed Jesus as Teacher and asked him: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” In reality, what this doctor of the Law wanted, Luke says, was to

test Jesus. But did he really want advice from the Teacher? Instead of answering, Jesus replies with another question, and the expert recites the “letter of the Law” from memory, taken from the Greek text of Deuteronomy (6:5) and Leviticus (19:18). Then the doctor of the Law asks: “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus responds with a parable.

The Teacher speaks to people and asks questions at the same time. He does so also with us: “And you, what do you think you should do to obtain eternal life? What relationship do you think there is between loving God with your whole heart and loving your neighbor as yourself? Who do you view as your neighbor?” Jesus make use of the parable to help us go beyond the letter of the Law, to deepen in its true spirit. The Law made distinctions and in doing so regulated human relationships. Jesus tells us that we can’t make

distinctions regarding others: everyone is our neighbor, even if they have another faith, or are of another race, or speak another language, or have shortcomings and make mistakes.

If we truly love God, we will share in his Love for all men and women, because we will see people as God sees them: all are called to be his children in Christ. And if we love ourselves truly, that is, giving thanks for the gifts we have received and being aware of the shortcomings and defects we need to try to overcome, we will realize what the love being asked of us involves: to give thanks for the gifts we see in others and to be understanding, slow to anger and rich in mercy, when we see their shortcomings and defects, trying to help one another improve each day. This means taking a true interest in the holiness of others. And this is what love is: to want for the other

person the greatest gift possible and to do what is in our power to help everyone attain it.

Juan Luis Caballero

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