*It will be interesting to discuss how the Jew would have repaid the kindness of his hated enemy. If the children are old enough, try placing it in their everyday experience, when someone they expected to have done something nasty to them actually turned out to be very kind.*

So, Jesus asked at the end: Which of the three, do you think, acted as a neighbour to the man who fell into hands of the robbers? Which of the three did what God wanted them to do? Which of the three turned out to be God’s friend?

What about the other two? Do you think they considered themselves to be God’s friend? Do you think God would have considered them to be friends on the basis of what they did? Which is more important --- to say that we are God’s friend or to do something that will show that we are God’s friend?

Stress that action speaks louder than words. If we say that we love God, we must prove it by loving other people. St John tells us that ‘Anyone who says, ”I love God’, and hates his brother, is a liar!’ (1Jn 4:20)

*It will also be interesting if we discuss why the priest and the deacon did not do what God wanted them to do. They were more concerned with their own ritual cleanliness, but in the end, lost the basis on which they were to be ritually clean. A parallel will be when children kick up a fuss over the best clothes to wear for mass and, in the process, ended up late and getting everybody upset.*

***LSW***

children

For older children

*Discuss the Golden Rule of Christianity: Do unto others as you would like other to do unto you.*

*Discuss the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans.  Much of the enmity stems from a refusal to interact with one another, with both preferring to keep to their prejudices and prejudgements of the other.  Much of the conflicts in the world arises because peoples and their leaders see others as caricatures and racial/religious biases rather than as people with the same hopes, fears, loves and dislikes as they are.  Are there any such enmity that your community has of other people.  Maybe it is time we start use the hated enemy the way Jesus used the hated Samaritans in his stories: as the good people instead of the baddies.*

Year **C**

# Fifteenth Sunday In Ordinary Time

**Theme**

To love God is to love other people as yourself

**Points to note**

This is one parable that had worked its way so much into the English language. People refer to the Good Samaritan without knowing who Samaritans are, and often with hazy recollections of the story. For those familiar with it, it is a parable so rich in lessons for us, and able to sustain us with much spiritual sustenance. And yet, the basic lesson of the reading is one and simple. It lies in the last line, ‘go and do the same yourself’. I am reminded of the story of the priest who was always using the parable in all his homilies. When asked if he could give a homily on something else, he would reply, “Why? What have you done about that one?”

A common feature when planning a session for such a rich passage is attempting to say too much at one go. Too often, however, such ‘carpet-bombing’ techniques leave the session poorly focused. I find it more helpful to concentrate on just one theme and treat it thoroughly. There are other readings in future weeks, or at worse, further themes could be dealt with in the next cycle.

By the way, Samaritans descended from a small remnant of Jews who were left behind when the Jews were deported to Babylon. They stayed behind in Palestine and mixed with the local people because there were very few of them. When the Jews returned from Babylon, they considered the Samaritans impure because they mixed with the local people. To this day, there are still Samaritans in Israel, who are not considered to be Jews, who held their own Temple sacrifice on Mount Gerizim.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life:

you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia!

## Gospel

*Explain that Jesus was himself on the way to Jerusalem when he told this story. Now, for the Jews of Jesus’ time, to go from Nazareth to Jerusalem would mean having to pass through the country of a people they didn’t like, the country of Samaria. The Jews hated the Samaritans. So, every time someone mentions Samaritans in the story, the Jews expect them to be the baddies. The children may be able to give contemporary examples themselves. This story, though, is different.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Lk 10: 25-37)

There was a lawyer who wanted to question Jesus, stood up and asked him, “Master, what must I do to achieve heavenly life?” He said to him, “What is in the scriptures? What do you read there?” He replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and you must love your neighbour as yourself.” “You have answered right,” said Jesus, “do this and you will get to heaven.”

But the man was anxious and asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus told this story, “A man was once on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers; they took all he had, beat him and ran off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happening to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a deacon who came that way saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came next was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went and bandaged his wounds, applied medicine on them. He then lifted him on to his own horse, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out some money and handed them to the innkeeper, ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and on the way back I will pay everything that is owed.’ Which of the three, do you think, acted as a neighbour to the man who fell into hands of the robbers?” “The one who took pity on him,” he replied. Jesus said to him, “Go, and do the same yourself.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Do you like yourself? If you are someone else, would you like to help yourself? What would you do?

*There are lots of wonderful things that everybody would like done for themselves. So, we needn’t take it that every child who gives us a long list is being self-centred. But try and steer the discussion away from being an overlong wish-list.*

But you are yourself, not some one else. All those things that you have mentioned, would you do it for others?

Let’s look at the story that Jesus told. What would the man who was lying half-dead on the ground wish the priest and deacon to do? Did they do what he wanted them to do?

*Here, it is important to stress that priests and deacons nowadays do not behave like that anymore. Has anyone ever met a priest or deacon, who have refused to help, anyway?*

What would God have like them to do? By not doing so, did they prove themselves to be God’s friends? Next, who turned up? (*Yes, the one who everybody thought to be the baddie*) What did the man on the ground think of the Samaritan helping him, him being a Jew? Did the Samaritan do what everyone expected him to do, ignoring the half-dead man?