

The Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 10:25-37

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (KJV)

God's Holy Church has begun the preparations for the Feast of the Nativity. The Nativity Fast has started (Nov.15/28) and continues until the Feast of the Nativity (Dec.25/Jan.7) The Nativity Fast is a gift to believers to benefit the self and others.

The Gospel reading for today emphasizes the importance of showing goodness and mercy to our neighbors. Changes within ourselves are necessary for our lives to fully conform to the Gospel.

Too often we are like the priest or the Levite in the current Gospel. Too often we do not want to see the suffering occurring nearby. We are not enough like the Samaritan who took time to show mercy on the suffering victim along the road.

Honest self-examination of the heart, mind and soul are required to bring about personal change. Repentance of hardness of heart and the elimination of selective vision are necessary for personal change.

To become merciful like the Samaritan we have to be willing to acknowledge suffering exists in people known to us. A willingness is required from us to act on this understanding.

Helping suffering individuals in our neighborhoods and communities is not always easy. We have to move from the comfort zones of our lives and reach out in faith and love.

Priests, parish leaders and parish organizations have opportunities to set the examples. During this time of the coronavirus, hardships have multiplied and reach across the neighborhoods of every community.

Individuals and families are suffering from job losses and reduction of wages. Mental stress has produced extensive pain and difficult working conditions for individuals in numerous work places.

Parish churches can be community leaders in giving voice and support for the individuals and groups suffering. Merciful acts of outreach and kindness can make a difference in human lives.

Providing food to the hungry, financial support to the needy and love for the stressed will address vital needs. Small efforts will lead to big results. Providing a meal, a financial donation or making a phone call or visit will facilitate healing.

The Christian life of love of God is fully connected with love of neighbor. Today's Gospel makes the connection clear. The Epistle of St. John is very explicit about loving God and neighbor.

St. John wrote: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his **brother** have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the **love** of God in him?" (Jn. 3:17)

The Nativity Fast is a period given by the Church for believers to increase personal love for God and for neighbor. As the Feast of the Nativity draws closer by the day, believers' lives are to be transformed and become more Christ-like.

Each day is a day of action. Each moment is a moment for reflection leading to increased love and manifestation of love. God is ever-present to help believers in the transformation.

The Lord Jesus Christ makes change possible in each person, each parish and each community. Strong faith will move mountains. The Samaritan in the current Gospel is a lasting example of love and mercy in action.

Each believer and each parish can choose to make a difference in today's world as part of God's Holy Church. More action can occur to manifest love of God and love of neighbor throughout the Nativity Fast and throughout the year.

Increase the healing today and strike at the heart of existing pain and despair. Christ's radiance is the brightness necessary in these days of gloom and hardship. Christ's love is the remedy for all ills and negative conditions.

The victim in the current Gospel experienced love taught by Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have Christ's teaching for us today. The responsibility to put the lesson into action rests on each believer and within each parish.

The Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew.
November 16/29, 2020. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic