

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, there may be a temptation in these days, to focus on one dimension of the Parable of the Good Samaritan and to miss the overall spectrum of the story and its meaning for us. It would be like looking at a Painting of the Mona Lisa, and looking at only her smile, thus failing to see the whole of the painting and its meaning.

In the story, we have five main characters, and each has an essential role: first, there is the priest. Secondly, there is the Levite. These are not a Catholic Priests- they are temple priests, they are both on the way back home from the temple, having completed their service; therefore, there is no worry about contaminating themselves with a dead man or with the man's blood, making themselves ritually unclean. Thirdly, there is the poor man beaten almost to death by the robbers. Fourthly, there is the good Samaritan who comes to his aid. And finally, there is the Inn Keeper, who takes the word and the payment of the Good Samaritan and receives the poor man into his care!

The Good Samaritan is, above all, a self-portrait of Jesus and what He has done for us, for the entire human family, left bleeding and dying from the wounds of sin. We are helpless to help ourselves, for we have been besieged by robbers, the demonic powers at work in the world seeking to steal from us the Original life of God for which He created us. We have been broken, and wounded by life in this fallen world, and in His incarnation, Jesus comes to us like the Good Samaritan- for He is mercy itself- a wholly unexpected and undeserved mercy! He pays for our restoration and heals us with the oil and wine of the Sacraments. He pays for our recuperation with the price of His own Life, and gives us into the care of His Innkeeper the Church, promising us that He will return again! Finally, He commands us "to go and do the same"!

I cannot understand the import of this story, unless I realize and understand that I myself am the poor man left for dead on the side of the road. I myself am the fallen man, robbed by the Evil One of the Life of God. Only Christ can restore me and heal me. We now live in a culture that is now drunk with a sense of its own power and strength and extreme individualism. We believe we are self-sufficient

and no longer need a Savior. Jesus reminds us of our true condition and our essential need of what only He can give us! In this mass, let us truly give thanks to God in Jesus that He has sent His only beloved Son to come and save us; and let us remember, that “as He has done for us; so are we called to do for others!”