

First Reading Dt 30:10-14

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people: 'Obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping those commandments and laws of his that are written in the Book of this Law, and you shall return to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.

'For this Law that I enjoin on you today is not beyond your strength or beyond your reach. It is not in heaven, so that you need to wonder, "Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it down to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" Nor is it beyond the seas, so that you need to wonder, "Who will cross the seas for us and bring it back to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" No, the Word is very near to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance.'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 68:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37. R. see v.33

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me.

As for me in my poverty and pain
let your help, O God, lift me up.
I will praise God's name with a song;
I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;

for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.

For God will bring help to Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
The sons of his servants shall inherit it;
those who love his name shall dwell there.

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live

Second Reading Col 1:15-20

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God
and the first-born of all creation,
for in him were created all things in heaven
and on earth: everything visible and everything
invisible, Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities,
Powers –
all things were created through him and for
him. Before anything was created, he existed,
and he holds all things in unity.
Now the Church is his body, he is its head. As
he is the Beginning, he was first to be born
from the dead, so that he should be first in
every way;
because God wanted all perfection
to be found in him and all things to be
reconciled through him and for him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
when he made peace by his death on the
cross.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words, Lord, are spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 10:25-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? 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 your neighbour as yourself.' 'You have answered right,' said Jesus, 'do this and life is yours.'

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened 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 Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him,' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same yourself.'

Reflection on the Gospel-15th Sunday in
Ordinary Time C
(Luke 10:25-37)
-Veronica Lawson RSM

The present ecological catastrophe calls us to new ways of being neighbour. We used to speak in terms of thinking globally and acting locally. If we are to be neighbour in our times, we need to think cosmically as well as globally and to act globally as well as locally. Thinking cosmically means embracing the entire fourteen billion year story of our expanding and evolving universe. It means accepting our cosmic identity and our intimate connectedness to the whole of creation. Thinking cosmically elicits wonder and respect for all created being and especially for God who is the Source and the Sustainer of all that exists. Cosmic thinking provides a context for acting globally and locally, for being neighbour in our local and global environments.

Today's gospel story is about being neighbour. It foregrounds the human characters and their relationships with each other. The lawyer who questions Jesus is trying to catch him out. He

addresses Jesus as "teacher" and Jesus demonstrates that he is indeed a teacher when he puts the question back to his interrogator and invites him to answer his own question. Like Jesus' audience, this legal expert knows the Jewish law regarding love of God and love of one's neighbour. He answers Jesus' first question correctly. This leads to another "test" question: "Who is my neighbour?" The lawyer would know very well that, for a Jew, the neighbour was another Jewish male. Jesus responds with a subversive story that ends in yet another question: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the bandits?" The lawyer cannot avoid the obvious answer, though it would cost a Jewish legal expert dearly to admit that a Samaritan could be neighbour to a Jew in need. Rather than utter the word "Samaritan" he answers obliquely with the words, "the one who showed mercy".

The Samaritan in the story is said to be "moved with compassion", literally "moved in the depths of his being". The Samaritan befriends the wounded traveller and draws on earth resources to care for him: fabric to bind the

wounds, wine and oil for healing, his "own animal" as transport, finance for accommodation, companionship at the inn, provision for ongoing care. The story offers the shocking suggestion that a Samaritan knows more about love of God and of neighbour than do those who officiate in temple worship, namely the priest and the Levite who "pass by".

Cosmic thinking invites us to focus not just on the human characters from different cultures and social strata in this story, but also on the neighbourly animal, on the fruit of the vine and of the olive grove and on the silver coins formed of material derived from cosmic activity, extracted from the earth and ultimately engaged as signs of compassionate neighbourly love. It invites us to reverence all of creation and the Creator of all that is.

