



Lent reflection for Monday, March 20th

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Luke 13:10-17

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Today's reflection is by Carol Normandin

When I first read this passage about healing in Luke, I smiled. I smiled because I think Jesus knew exactly that what He was doing would stir up the anger of the authorities. The leader of the synagogue, who was intent on following and enforcing every syllable of the law, would be ready to pounce on any deviation. Jesus chose to heal on the Sabbath, not to anger anyone, but to emphasize that His message and mission were greater than the boundaries and limitations of the leader's view of the law.

Two or three days a week, I walk into a different and unfamiliar classroom as a substitute teacher in a large, urban high school. I can tell in a few minutes whether I am subbing for a successful or an unsuccessful teacher. I can tell by the emotional climate of the room, by the rules posted and

the plans provided. If the rules emphasize punishments, and the plans focus on negative behaviors, I know that I am in for a tough day subbing for a teacher who is more interested in the “letter of the law” and catching students in misbehaviors. A teachers’ purpose should be to encourage students to try their best. Students will not try if they are afraid of being punished. This passage tells us that there is a greater purpose in healing and teaching than following “the letter of the law”. The spirit of the law allows the greater purpose to emerge. This purpose is love, to be open to healing or teaching. I believe this affirms what Jesus said in Matthew, “I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.” Thus, in all that we do, let us strive to see that the larger vision includes compassion.

Carol Normandin is a semi-retired high school teacher living in a Kansas City suburb. She is grateful for Zoom church and the opportunity to join the Holy Apostles’ community along with my daughter Laura and her family, the Tyszkas.

