

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, July 13, 2025

The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than sixteen years.

THE REAL QUESTION

"And who is my neighbor?" This is the question the scholar of the law directs to Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 10: 25-37).

It is a question that Jesus does not directly answer. Instead, he tells the famous parable about a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho who was attacked by robbers who "stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half dead." A priest and a Levite come across the wounded man, notice him and continue on their way.

A Samaritan, a member of a group despised as heretical by faithful Jews, sees the suffering man and goes to his assistance. The Samaritan undoubtedly saves the man's life.

After telling the parable, Jesus asks the scholar who had questioned him, which of the three men "was neighbor to robbers' victim?" The scholar reluctantly admits, "The one who treated him with mercy." Though in making that admission, the Jewish scholar cannot bring himself to identify the one who helped as being a Samaritan.

Jesus then tells the scholar, "Go and do likewise." Imitate the action of that Samaritan.

As we see, Jesus does not answer the scholar's initial question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus does not identify what people or what groups the scholar should consider as his neighbors, worthy of his love. Instead, he tells the scholar to act as a caring neighbor.

Certainly, the man who was left lying half-dead along the road to Jericho would have considered the Samaritan a true neighbor.

As followers of Jesus, you and I are not to be in the business of deciding what people we should help, what people we should love as we love ourselves. Rather, we are to be a neighbor to any suffering, hurting person who catches our attention as we journey on the road of life.

The real question that we need to answer is not, "Who is my neighbor?" but rather, "Am I being a good neighbor? Am I acting like the Samaritan in Sunday's Gospel?" He is the person that Jesus tells us to imitate, "Go and do likewise."

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