

Sunday, July 14, 2019.

Morning. Let us continue our consideration of the Good Samaritan that we began yesterday. In *Les Misérables*, John Valjean shows compassion for others and is willing to help them even if it puts him in a compromising situation. Similarly in Jesus' Gospel story of 2,000 years ago, the priest (as would Javert) shows no compassion in living out the letter of the Law. It is the good Samaritan (as would John Valjean) who is willing to compromise himself and become unclean out of compassion for this man who was bleeding and half dead.

Afternoon. Today's Gospel reads, "he was moved with compassion at the sight of the man... he approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds. Then he lifted him up and took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'"

Evening. No doubt about it, this man – the good Samaritan — acted with great compassion. Let us not forget, he broke the law of God. He did not follow, but rather disobeyed what it says early on in the Bible about not coming into contact with somebody who is bleeding.

Monday, July 15, 2019.

Morning. Let us step away from our consideration of the good Samaritan for a day and focus on St Bonaventure. Two-thousand years ago was a blessed time for our Church as both the Blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus walked this earth. Over a thousand years later, and less than a thousand years ago, our Church experienced another blessed time, as Saint Francis (born 1181), Saint Bonaventure (born 1221) and St Thomas Aquinas (born 1225) walked this earth at that time.

Afternoon. Today on the Church's calendar we have St Bonaventure, who played an important role in both the medieval Church and the history of the Franciscan Order. Taking St Francis as his model, he centered everything on Jesus—his teaching, his administration, his writing, and his life.

Evening. He was both an administrator (Bishop of Albano and Cardinal) as well as theologian. Among his wide range of contributions to the church are an organized spirituality based on the vision and insights of Saint Francis and numerous writings on the pastoral and practical aspects of life as well as on the doctrines of the Church. There is a warmth to his teachings and writings that have made him very appealing throughout the past several centuries. He died in 1274, the same year as did St Thomas Aquinas die. The late 12th and early 13th centuries were truly a blessed time for our church, owing to the presence of three great saints. Today we remember one of them, St Bonaventure.

Tuesday, July 16, 2019.

Morning. Let us return to our consideration of the good Samaritan Gospel passage. The majority of the time, there will be no contradiction between loving our neighbor (which is the second great commandment) and living out the letter of the law as specified in the Bible. However, there will be those exceptions. Jesus never hesitated about presenting a story that would challenge his listeners. In this past Sunday's Gospel reading, one is called out of compassion to minister to a bleeding person, and thereby become unclean.

Afternoon. How many times did Jesus himself break the Law as presented in the Bible? He was accused of breaking the rule of the Sabbath for healing the man with the shriveled hand on the Sabbath. He touched a leper (forbidden). He worked on the Sabbath (forbidden). He let the adulterous woman walk away when the Bible reads that she should have been stoned to death.

Evening. We are called to follow the law of God, as written in the Bible. It helps us to love and serve God and our fellow human beings. If, because of the way particular circumstances play out, there is a contradiction between showing love for our fellow human beings and carrying out the law, as we see in today's Gospel reading, then we are to act out of compassionate love.

Wednesday, July 17, 2019.

Morning. The take-home message of Sunday's Gospel reading is to act compassionately. Do not be like the priest who, out of fear of breaking the law of God, avoided helping a man who was bleeding to death. Instead, we are called to be like the good Samaritan who risks being unclean by breaking the law as stated in the Bible. We can re-read the hundreds of words that make up this Gospel passage and then spend a couple hours watching *Les Miserables*. Most importantly, we can spend the rest of our lives living out a life of love and compassion.

Afternoon. Let us continue our consideration of the Good Samaritan Gospel passage by imagining ourselves to be first one and then the other of the characters. Are there times when we are the priest, in the story? Are there times when we pass by somebody who is in need rather than helping him or her?

Evening. If so, rather than beating up on ourselves for being heartless, let us instead see what might cause us to have acted in that way. As in the story, would I fear that I might come in contact with some of the blood or hurt or pain of the person who is in need, and that would make me unclean? Am I on so tight of a schedule that I just do not have a free minute to help another in need? Do I fear that if I get close to someone who is in pain, it might make me aware of the pain in my own life that I have hitherto been denying?

Thursday, July 18, 2019.

Morning. As we take our time to come to a deeper understand of why we might pass by someone else who is need, we come to a deeper understanding of who we are. Do I simply get the right haircut, shave or put on the right makeup, wear the right clothes because that is what is expected of someone in my position? If so, then no problem.

Afternoon. Or does the fact that life is messy and at times uncontrollable lead me to be overly focused on being neat and tidy and clean? If so, I am not yet able to help another who is in pain and therefore I would pass him or her by. I must first walk the journey of making peace with the fact that life is messy and at times uncontrollable and then I will be free to roll up my sleeves and comfort the wounds of another.

Evening. Do I jam pack my schedule so that there is not a free minute? Do I set the alarm for an hour earlier and drink coffee to stay up an hour later so that I can schedule another two hours into my already over scheduled life? If not, then no problem. If so, then I am not going to have

a free moment to help another in need. I must first take stock of my life and see what can be eliminated so there is free time in my day. That way when the unexpected happens I will be able to attend to it. I will be able to spend some time with those who are in need and still get done everything else that I need to get done.

Friday, July 19, 2109.

Morning. None of us are free from having experienced hardship and trauma. Have I embraced those experiences and been healed of the pain that accompanied them? If so, then no problem. If not, then most likely I have suppressed the pain of the hardships and trauma that I have experienced. I have pushed it down deep. I am no longer conscious of it. It is stewing and festering in my subconscious.

Afternoon. All it takes is one trigger for all of the pain to rise up and overwhelm me. I do everything and anything to avoid those triggers. Coming into contact with another's pain could be a trigger that makes me aware of my own pain. I must walk that journey of embracing and making peace with the hardships and trauma that I have experienced. I must experience and then be healed of the pain associated with those experiences. Only then will I be free to come close enough to the pain of another to be able to help him or her.

Evening. Only when we discover why we might avoid somebody who is in need will we be able to walk the journey of growing in maturity into a place where we can help another.