

### **Sunday, July 21, 2019.**

**Morning.** Before continuing to probe the depths of the Good Samaritan passage, let us quickly review the details. The priest shows no compassion for the injured man. It is the good Samaritan who is willing to compromise himself and become unclean out of compassion for this man who was bleeding and half dead.

**Afternoon.** We definitely want to be the Good Samaritan. We want to be the one who helps others. Let us just be certain that we are doing it for the right reasons. Jesus presents this story in response to a man who wanted to justify himself. The man had something he wanted to prove.

**Evening.** If there is any immature tendency in us to seek to justify ourselves or to prove ourselves, let us be healed of what is leading us to justify or prove ourselves. I may be carrying some great sin of 20 years ago. In an effort to prove to myself that I am not a bad person, I seek to do good things. If so, let me confess that sin and be healed. Then I am free to do good, simply for the good of the other person. I have no need to prove anything.

### **Monday, July 22, 2019.**

**Morning.** I may have a poor self-image. In an effort to prove to others that I am a good and important person, I seek to do good things. If so, let me develop and cultivate friendships with people who care for and respect me. Surrounding myself with such people does wonders for my self-esteem. Furthermore, let me make a firm commitment to spend time regularly in prayer, for experiencing the love that God has for me is the best way to go from having a poor self-image to realizing that I am made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As my poor self-image is replaced by experiences of being loved for and cared for and respected by friends and God, I am then free to do good, simply for the good of the other person. I have no need to prove anything.

**Afternoon.** The good Samaritan “was moved with compassion at the sight” of the other person who was in need of help. Let us similarly have compassion to be the motivating factor that leads us to help others.

**Evening.** I have a theory that if I am not in touch with the common bond that links me to all of humanity, I will lead a lonely life. For the first half of my life, I might be able to escape the feelings of loneliness by busying myself from morning to night, but I cannot run forever and sooner or later the loneliness will crush me.

### **Tuesday, July 23, 2019.**

**Morning.** What leads me to separate myself from others? A need to think of myself as better or smarter than others? A need to have more than others, and a fear that they might take what I have away? A fear of being hurt by others if I am close to them? There are endless reasons why I may adopt a mindset in which I see myself as separate from others. Regardless of which reason motivates me, if I act out of mindset that separates me from others, I will lead a lonely life.

**Afternoon.** If I associate with others who are better or smarter than myself, if I share with others what I have, if I allow myself to be close to others, I am taking big risks. I am also opening

myself up to a great reward. As I change my mindset from “I am separate from others,” to “I belong to one, big human family,” the loneliness disappears and I am free to be motivated by compassion for others in my actions, as was the good samaritan motivated by compassion at the sight of the injured man.

**Evening.** Having considered when I might be the priest and then the good samaritan, let me now consider when I might be the wounded person in the Gospel reading. I need to quit denying and admit that I do carry wounds. I need to embrace them and allow myself to be healed of them.

### **Wednesday, July 24, 2019.**

**Morning.** The details in the good samaritan Gospel show us that it is Jesus himself who is healing the wounded man. After the good samaritan bandaged the man, he took him to the inn and instructed the innkeeper to care for the wounded man until he returns. Permit me to paraphrase to show that the good samaritan is acting as an agent of God. After Jesus bandaged the man, Jesus left the wounded man in the care of the innkeeper (the Church) and before his departure (his Ascension into heaven), he instructed the innkeeper (the Church) to care for the wounded man until his return (Jesus’ return in his second coming.).

**Afternoon.** I ask you to sit with this interpretation. I am wounded. I am in need of healing. Jesus chooses to heal me of my wounds, either himself, or through another. Then I am entrusted to the care of the church until Jesus returns in his second coming.

**Evening.** So let me take the time to admit to the wounds that I carry from past hardships and trauma that I have experienced. Let me look to Jesus himself (or to whomever Jesus has chosen to act on his behalf) to heal me of those wounds. Let me see Jesus as having entrusted me to the care of the church until he returns in his second coming. And so we bring to a conclusion our consideration of the Good Samaritan Gospel passage.

### **Thursday, July 25, 2019.**

**Morning.** Let us take the next few days considering the Saints that the Church has put on the calendar for this week, starting with St Mary Magdalene. Mentioned a dozen times in the Gospels, she was present with Christ during his public ministry, death and resurrection (being the first to witness the Resurrected Jesus). The Gospels agree that Mary was originally a great sinner. Jesus cast seven demons out of her when he met her. Neither scripture nor Church history tell any specifics of her sin. It is a common culture that has assigned certain types of sin to her early lifestyle.

**Afternoon.** Regardless of what her particular sins might have been, her story is one of conversion. Her love for Jesus was so strong and her conversion so complete that many of those who had participated in her sinful lifestyle also converted. To this day, she is considered a patron saint of converted sinners.

**Evening.** It can be difficult, even impossible, for us to give up our faults, failings, shortcomings and sins when we are simply relying on our own human efforts to do the right thing. In imitation

of our great saint of today, let's look to Jesus and so fill our lives with an overwhelming love for him so there is no room left in our lives for our sins.

### **Friday, July 26, 2019.**

**Morning.** Owing to the fact that there were two immediate followers of Jesus named James, the Saint whose feast day we celebrate this week was/is referred to as the Greater, and the other Saint James (whose feast day is May 3) was/is referred to as the Lesser. As an aside, I wonder if one got a big head from being labeled the Greater and the other suffered from an insecurity complex from being labeled the Lesser.

**Afternoon.** Although James was referred to as the Greater, he still would have to contend with being the brother of St John the Apostle. St John is at times not even referred to by name, but rather as "the one whom Jesus loved." Whether James and his brother John fought as children about whom was loved best by their parents is not known. What is certain and recorded in scripture is that in their adulthood, it was not James but John who was referred to as "the one whom Jesus loved."

**Evening.** Among the immediate followers of Jesus, there was one who enjoyed the title "the Greater" and another who would be forever labeled as "the Lesser." And lest our Saint of this week might get a big head from being known as "the Greater," he would have to contend with the reality that he was never referred to as "the one whom Jesus loved." That privilege belonged to his brother. So it will be for us. We will be labeled. We will be forever compared. The key is for us not to allow ourselves to be defined by labels or comparisons.

### **Saturday, July 27, 2019.**

**Morning.** Let us consider Saints Joachim and Ann as an example of finding our meaning in our relationship to Jesus. The most frequently used reference to these saints is the added description, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. That makes them the grandparents of Jesus. Their place in history is found in their relationship to Jesus. So let us look to what our relationship is to Jesus. How does that define who we are?

**Afternoon.** During the 1990's, in discerning to which aspect of ministry should I devote the remainder of my life, it became more and more family — and in particular, to devote myself to ministering to families in a parish setting. My own mother is a grandmother and I have gotten to know many of you who are grandparents. I have been moved by the depth of love that you have for your grandchildren. How you love when they come to your home or you go to their home, to care for them.

**Evening.** Joachim and Ann are the patron saints of grandparents. Today is sometimes referred to as "the feast of grandparents." All of the grandparents in our parish: This is your feast day!