15th.Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C). July 10, 2022. Dt 30:10-14; Col 1:15-20; Lk 10:25-37.

**“Go and do likewise…Love God and express it by loving your neighbor.”**

 A scribe asked Jesus a very basic religious question: **“What should I do to inherit eternal life?”** In answer to the question, Jesus directed the Scribe’s attention to the Sacred Scriptures, which says, **“love God and express it by loving your neighbor.”**

However, to the scribe, the word **“neighbor”** meant another scribe or Pharisee – never a Samaritan or a Gentile. Hence, he insisted on a clarification of the word “neighbor.” So Jesus told him the parable of the Good Samaritan, which clearly indicates that a “neighbor” is anyone who needs help. Thus, the correct approach is not to ask the question **“Who is my neighbor?”** but rather to ask, “**Am I a good neighbor to others?”** Consequently, today’s gospel challenges us to ask the question whether we are Good Samaritans or good neighbors to everyone in need in our family, workplace, parish, and community.

**Life message:** Let us remember that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho passes right through our home, parish, school and workplace. We may find our spouse, children or parents lying **“wounded”** by bitter words or scathing criticism or by other more blatant forms of verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Hence, Jesus invites us to show our love to others, in our own home, in school, in the workplace, and in the neighborhood, as the Good Samaritan did. Let us check to see if we are good neighbors. We become good neighbors when we are people of generosity, kindness, and mercy toward all who are suffering. Our sincere smile, a cheery greeting, an encouraging word of appreciation, a heartfelt **“thank you”** can all work wonders for a suffering soul. Moreover, for some of us, it may be persons of another color or race; for others, it may mean persons of a different political persuasion, religions or football teams.

**Conclusion:** The Good Samaritan par excellence and our ultimate neighbor, beyond all comparison, who healed and delivered us from our sins out of his loving mercy and compassion for us is our Lord Jesus. After he healed us, he entrusted us to his inn, which is his Church, for further spiritual caring and nourishment. In other words, St. Paul reminds the Colossians, and us, that just as Christ Jesus is the **“visible image of the invisible God,”** so our neighbors are the visible image of Christ living in our midst. Jesus, the Heavenly Good Samaritan, gave us a final commandment during the Last Supper, **“Love one another as I have loved you,”** because the invisible God dwells in every human being.

**Columnist Ann Landers** once wrote, **"Be kind to people. The world needs kindness so much. You never know what sort of battles other people are fighting. Often just a soft word or a warm compliment can be immensely supportive. You can do a great deal of good by just being considerate, by extending a little friendship, going out of your way to do just one nice thing, or saying one good word."**

Therefore, let us pray that the Spirit of the Living God may melt us, mold us and use us, so that there will no longer be even one person who is untouchable or outside the boundaries of compassion. In short, **“Go and do likewise…Love God and express it by loving your neighbor.”**