

THE GOOD SAMARITAN TEACHES US CHRISTIAN VALUES

The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) teaches us not to be merciless or unloving towards our neighbour. He represents Jesus, whose boundless mercy and love is for everyone in the world. The Word became Flesh and came down to help us in our need. He comes to our aid when we fall into sin, and become close to spiritual death, unable to pick ourselves up. *Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God* (Col 1:15). By His precious Blood, He paid for our sins, picked us up, and mounted us on His shoulders, in order to bring us back to full spiritual health again. The problem is that we keep falling into the state of sin, by allowing the devil to attack us much too often. This creates a new outstanding debt to Christ that can only be repaid when we repent. To ask Him for the forgiveness of sins, allows His saving power to heal the wounds of our sins, in the sacrament of confession. Sin is like a disease infecting the soul and making it spiritually sick. If left untreated, like all diseases, it will deteriorate and kill the soul. Without healing here on earth, we cannot get into heaven. *Lord, I am not worthy to receive You, but only say the Word and my soul shall be healed.* Like the Good Samaritan, Jesus continues to pay the price for us. The purpose for a parable is to teach us to meditate and ponder on the hidden symbolisms within them.

SECURE OUR FAITH

In today's parable, Jericho represents the sinful world. The man was coming from the holy city of Jerusalem, which represents us coming from holy baptism. As we go through life in this world, we are at risk of being attacked by Satan, who will rob us of our precious faith, grace and holiness. The two denarii paid out by the Good Samaritan represents Jesus' Body and Blood, as payment for our sins. His talk of returning to the Innkeeper, refers to His Second Coming, when He will return to bring the spiritual healthy up to heaven. The Inn and its Keeper symbolises the Church, entrusted to us by Christ, to take care of the poor and the needy, and prepare us for His return at the Second Coming. The wounded man represents humanity attacked by the *brigand* devil, with the result of leaving us wounded and broken-down in sin. The oil and wine symbolise those sacraments of the Church, especially the Blood of Christ, spiritually poured out upon us in confession, healing the wounds of our sins. We should be alert to the fact that the devil's mission is to rob us of eternal life. The Priest and the Levite, who walked by, symbolise corrupt religious, who neglect the mission given to them. Everyone shares in the priesthood of Christ since baptism, so everyone has a responsibility to exercise charity. It is important to understand that the Samaritan people were pagans. However, this story teaches us that everyone has God within them - even if they are unaware of His presence. He manifests Himself in us, when we practice charity, even in something simple, such as sharing a glass of water with the thirsty, or exchanging a kind word with our neighbour (Deut 30:10-14). The parable teaches us to show compassion, to cross boundaries, and *to love our neighbour*, regardless of religion, nationality or colour. The man also reminds us of Adam in the Garden of Eden, who was conquered by Satan. The denarii coins also represent our own lives, because coins spend of themselves, and we are called to spend of ourselves on each other. Like a coin, there are two sides to many people. One side can represent our duty to serve God and *to love Him with all our hearts, souls, strength and minds* and the other side I can serve the world mindlessly and oneself only. The cost of discipleship must be to serve others at a cost to ourselves. We are all called to act like the Good Samaritans. Our hearts should pour out unconditional compassion toward our neighbour, putting aside our indifferences and showing goodness, kindness, and understanding, especially to those in need of our help and consolation. The Truth can be assaulted but never defeated. God bless, Fr. Brendan.