

**For The Bulletin Of
July 14, 2019**



**THE 15TH SUNDAY IN
SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

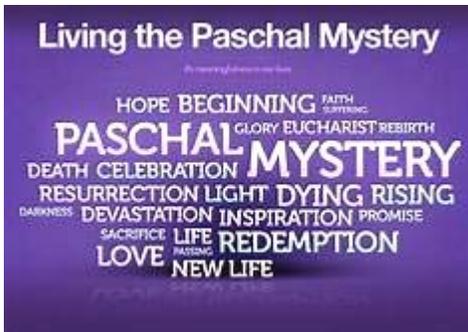
Luke introduces the Parable of the Good Samaritan with a story found in Matthew and Mark, namely, a scholar of the law correctly summing up the law as loving God and loving one's neighbor. In the other gospels the story effectively ends and another teaching is introduced. But Luke tells us that the scholar wanted to "justify himself" and so to clarify who is his neighbor. Rather than answer straightforwardly, Jesus poses a story with which we are familiar. The priest and the Levite, both upright privileged people considered favored by God, leave the unfortunate man in the ditch. Only the Samaritan, one of a group of people generally despised by many Jewish people of the time, offered any assistance. And it was no mere prayer or well-wish. He went out of his way, cared for the victim, bandaged him, carried him, and paid for his stay at the equivalent of a hotel. With that, Jesus asks the scholar which of the three was

the neighbor to the man in the ditch? The scholar of the law in reply does not even use the word Samaritan, but says, "The one who treated him with mercy."

Though the question is about "neighbor," mercy is the keyword in this gospel. The scholar was likely predisposed to believe that the priest or the Levite would be a neighbor, by acting mercifully. But it was the person the scholar did not expect who acted in that way.

When the scholar asks, "And who is my neighbor?" the answer could rightly be said, "The one who treated him with mercy." When one is in the ditch needing help, who is neighbor? More important than role or station, privilege or power, is the capacity and the willingness to be merciful and to receive mercy. Without mercy, the person in the ditch dies. One reading of Jesus' story might be that we are the person in the ditch. We should be open to receive acts of mercy no matter where they come from, or who performs them. Those who act in this way are neighbor, much more so than those we might otherwise expect. As Jesus continues to do so, He creates upheaval in our worldview by a simple story that causes us to reconsider our priorities and prejudices.





Sometimes those who need to be helped want help on their own terms. But today's gospel is a reminder that to those in the ditch, help may come from the most unforeseen or even unimaginable people. When we place limitations on even such things as who might lend us help or assistance, we might not be open to the mercy of God, which is extended in a variety of ways. Though this parable of the Good Samaritan is often read to mean we should be neighborly and act mercifully, it can also be read in a way so that we are open to receive mercy and kindness from others, no matter who they might be. Jesus invites us to move beyond ourselves in moments of crisis and to be open to mercy from wherever it might come. In doing so, we die to our own preconceived notions and live anew with an openness broader than we had before. For if we in the ditch are not willing to see the Samaritan as a neighbor, and accept his act of mercy, we will surely die in that same ditch.

Given what is happening at our border with Mexico, today's gospel has far reaching implications.

- Jesus confronts His Jewish audience by making a Samaritan the hero of His story. What groups within your life do you have a hard time believing well of? What happens if you

imagine a member of this group taking the place of the Samaritan in this parable?

- The scholar of the law tries to get out of the commandment of God on a technicality. Love my neighbor, but who is my neighbor? Are there place in the life of faith, in our denomination, where we are tempted to limit God and God's mercy? Are there some people you believe are outside the realm of God's mercy?
- Jesus tells the scholar of the law, "Go and do likewise," after relaying the parable of the Samaritan's care for the robbers' victim. Who are the people in our community who are left on the side of the road isolated, wounded, and alone? How might we begin to be a neighbor to these sisters and brothers of ours?
- The man in the ditch must accept the help of the Samaritan in order to find relief. When have you received help from unexpected or even shocking sources? If ever?



About Liturgy: Effective Hospitality

In today's gospel, the question posed by the scholar of the law, "And who is my neighbor?" gives us an opportunity to look at how we answer this question based on our

practice of hospitality before, during, and after each Liturgy.

Like many good intentions, hospitality can become relegated to a committee or group of people who become responsible for hospitality on behalf of the parish. Thus we get hospitality committees, or we have announcements that go something like “Hospitality is provided this weekend by our Knights of Columbus.” Can you hear how strange that might sound to a visitor, as if being welcomed is a scheduled event or fulfilled by a specific group? (We actually do this on the first Sunday of each month!)

When we approach hospitality in this way, we can often get the notion that we have “done hospitality” if I ask all the visitors to stand up at the beginning of the Liturgy or some other point “so that we can welcome them.” I always try to show gratitude for the presence of visitors without asking them to stand or otherwise identify themselves in some way. This may convey a sense of welcome to the visitors, however, if that were all they experienced as hospitality, and no one actually spoke to them or engaged them in personal conversation, one would doubt they would actually feel they belonged or were truly welcome.

Hospitality is not a task we can check off a to-do list. It’s not something that is scheduled. Hospitality is the attitude we take when we are going about our ordinary routine and we come across a stranger along the roadside of life who needs our attention. Hospitality

is not welcoming people into our home but treating them as though this place is their home and they belong here and have a voice here. Hospitality then is everyone’s responsibility, offered at all times, for the sake of acknowledging that the stranger/visitor is actually our neighbor. How can we continue to cultivate an attitude and atmosphere of genuine hospitality?

One way is to sit in the middle of the pew so that people who arrive after you have a place ready and waiting for them. When a person sits by you, say hello, shake their hand, and introduce yourself to them. Don’t wait to be prompted to welcome them. If you are serving in the ministry of being a Greeter, please do not speak only to people you know but graciously and warmly welcome all who enter through the doors. Actively seek out the newcomer and greet people you don’t know.



Parish Tour To France

I have begun to plan another tour in 2020 to Paris and the North of France, visiting its famous cathedrals, museums, historical sites, Normandy, and Lourdes. **Linda Grelli and Black Diamond Travel** are our travel consultants and are putting the tour together. I am very pleased to share with you, that after consultation with Linda, we have set the dates for the tour as the following:

August 25 – September 5, 2020. I have attached the proposed itinerary to the Insert.

If you think you might be interested in joining us, please give the parish office a call and leave your contact information, name, phone number, etc. and we will be in touch to firm up the arrangements. Also, watch my Insert for updates and detailed information.



The Parish Embarks On A Five Year Strategic Plan

Last Fall, the leadership of the diocese gathered at St. Isidore Parish in Danville to listen to a presentation by Father James Mallon, the author of “Divine Renovation: Moving The Parish From Maintenance To Mission.” Following that presentation, the leadership of our parish, consisting of the Pastoral Staff, Pastoral Council, and Finance Council, began meeting to read and discuss the chapters of Father Mallon’s book and its implications for St. Ignatius of Antioch.

We are beginning our 41st year of ministry, following the wonderful celebration of our 40th Anniversary and there could not be a better time to plan for the next chapter of our parish’s life and ministry. Fr. Mallon strongly recommends planning not for 20 years,

15 years, 10 years, but for 5 years and putting into place a plan that is realistic, achievable, measurable, and will insure the parish’s health and growth.

We have discussed the changes that have taken place in our parish over the last 40 years, the decline in membership and the reasons for that, the change in demographics, the increasing diversity of our membership, and the aging of those presently registered and active. Our concern is for the future of the parish, who will succeed those here now, and how can we best meet the needs of not only those who are here but also those who are not here. What do we need to do to be effective “missionary disciples?” as Pope Francis has indicated.

Another major concern of mine as your brother, shepherd, and pastor is that I am now 72 years old, have been ordained for 45 years, and am in my 15th year here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. I am the only member of my ordination class who is still alive and in active ministry, the remainder having retired or died. At some point, there will be new pastoral leadership and we need to make sure that the ministries, programs, and outreaches that are the hallmark of our parish continue. I want the parish to be ready for that moment so that the transition can be as smooth as possible. The strategic planning that we are doing is meant to help with that process, caring for and ministering to all those who are here now as well as those who will come after us. We have been given a great legacy and we are responsible to leave a legacy to those who will continue ministry after us.

To that end, we will be gathering a group together that is interested, enthusiastic, positive, energetic, and visionary. Seeking out and providing leadership training for those younger than ourselves is a critical piece of our planning. How shall we meet the needs of an increasingly diverse cultural and ethnic faith community?

Those who have been a part of the planning process have begun to discern individuals and couples whom they believe should be a part of our discussions and planning going forward. They have directed me to write a Letter of Invitation to these individuals to welcome them to the process of strategic planning for the next 5 years. I would ask for your prayers for the success of this initiative and for all of us who are a part of the planning. I will continue to keep you updated on our progress through the Insert.

From Father Ron Schmit, Pastor of St. Anne Parish, Byron

When I opened Fr. Ron's bulletin on Tuesday, I saw that he had written to his parishioners along the same lines that I have written to you. I am copying his article for you because it is excellent. He writes:

I sometimes ponder who will come to St. Anne when I retire or die. Will there be anyone? Statistics show that over half of the 45,000 priests now working in the U.S. Church will be retired or have died in the next few years. The average age of U.S. priests is 68.8 years. Last week, the Wall Street Journal ran an article entitled, *Catholics Debate The Future of Priestly Celibacy*. It focused on the Bishops of the Amazon region in South America who are looking to

ordain married indigenous leaders. Many of this region's towns and villages are isolated and drastically lack priests to serve them.

Focusing on ordaining priests, married or not, is too narrow. We need a dramatic shift in our understanding of Church. We need to look at history but more importantly Scripture. Much of what we think of as the structure of the Church is not rooted in Scripture. It is the detritus of the Greco-Roman world. The Signs of the times indicate that the Spirit is calling us to jettison these dead ways. However, we still have many bishops and priests clinging to the old forms. Those forms are relics of an imperial Church of hierarchies, power, and privilege granted by the Emperor Constantine.

Jesus was not a Jewish priest. He lived and died as a Palestinian Jew. He was a prophetic lay-teacher. He announced the radical transformation that is coming with the establishment of the Reign of God. Jesus reveals that the power of God is humble service. The Kingdom of God comes to turn the hierarchies of this world upside down and inside out. *"If anyone wishes to rank first, he must first remain the last one of all..."* (Mark 9:35) Like the 72 who were sent out (in our passage from Luke today) ministry is a personal call from Christ to announce the Good News.

The source of ministry and discipleship is not by delegation of the clergy but it is a responsibility that arises from our Christian Initiation (Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist). These form us as the people of God and part of the priesthood of all believers. These

sacraments call us to evangelize, to serve and to heal the world.

The foundational sacrament is baptism, not ordination. Ordained ministry is rooted in Baptism and a call to serve and empower the baptized. It is important to recognize those who lead the Christian community through ordination. However, ordination is a call to servant-leadership, not special privileges. St. Augustine said correctly, *“With you I am baptized; for you, I was ordained.”* This is the proper balance.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Second Vatican Council redefined the Church. We no longer see the Church as a hierarchy with rulers over the ruled. The Council defines the Church as the whole “people of God.” They said that all the baptized share “in the mission of the whole Christian people for the building up of the Body of Christ.” (Lumen Gentium#32)

This is why Francis, Bishop of Rome, has recently said, *“...every one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change we so greatly need...it is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God’s people.”* So if you wonder from where the leadership of the parish (both lay and ordained) will come, look around you! Christ promised He will not leave us orphans! The future leaders of our parish are right here.”

Thank you, Father Ron, for your insight, wisdom, and for summing up so beautifully the situation we face.



Please remember to send in your Tithes and Offerings during the summer months. While we are able to take vacation and get away, the bills, financial obligations, staff salaries, and other financial responsibilities continue. We appreciate how faithful you are in supporting the parish and the building of God’s kingdom here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. The summer months, June through August, present the greatest challenge to our budget. Thank you in advance for making sure that your weekly offering/tithe/pledge is sent in.



We continue to be grateful to all those who volunteer in a variety of ways to help us with the responsibilities of caring for our parish, its program, ministries, and outreaches. Every Saturday morning, there is a faithful group of dedicated volunteers who clean and maintain the sanctuary and parish hall and on behalf of all of us, I thank: **Jean Rogers, Alfred Madoshi, Carole Miller, Jun Bajet, Mency Osborne, Al Cosce, Angela Bueno, and Emilia Freking.**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Father Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Frances Rojek, Mel Costanza, Maryann Peddicord, Estrella Rusk, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa and Paul Riofski.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Carole Miller (Lead), Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta, and Sherry Webb.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Tony Gumina.**

40th Anniversary Photographic Book

I just received this week a beautifully done photographic book of our parish's 40th Anniversary celebration. I would like to thank Lilya Superales of *Photography By Lilya*, for doing such a

wonderful job of capturing the Liturgy and the dinner afterward.

If anyone is interested in purchasing this book of photographic memories, please contact Lilya at 925-852-3075 or by email at:

superalesphotography@gmail.com .

