

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 Dt 30:10-14

Moses said to the people:

"If only you would heed the voice of the LORD, your God, and keep his commandments and statutes that are written in this book of the law, when you return to the LORD, your God, with all your heart and all your soul.

"For this command that I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you. It is not up in the sky, that you should say, 'Who will go up in the sky to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?' Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?'

No, it is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out."

Reading 2 Col 1:15-20

Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross

Reflection Process / Questions

- **5 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
- **5 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
- **5 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.

• Moses is giving his final words of farewell in the book of Deuteronomy today. The 'Law' which Moses gave to Israel from God is not simply written in decrees but is written into our very nature.... 'very near to you'. Jewish people kept this 'shema' close to them by posting it on their doorways and wrapping it around their foreheads in times of prayer. How could you keep God's ways and guidelines close to you? Is there any practice or habit you could adopt to express a love for God's teachings?

• We hear from St Paul's letter to the Colossians in the next 3 Sundays. Paul is writing a letter to correct errors of a heresy. Gnosticism taught that God was only spirit and did not mix with the material world of 'matter'. Jesus therefore was thought of as an 'intermediary' between God and Man, like an Angel. God couldn't become 'flesh' because this would involve God getting 'dirty' and mixing with humanity! Paul responds Jesus Christ is truly the image and exact representative of the invisible God, the fulness of God dwelt in him. God has truly come among us and reconciled us. What was the obstacle of Gnosticism? Is this obstacle in your own thinking?

through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven.

Gospel Lk 10:25-37

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

He said in reply, You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, 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.'

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

- The Parable of the Good Samaritan is intended to 'shake us' toward loving as God loves. Parables are meant to 'shock' us out of the status quo. Stay with the parable until something 'shocks' you.
- Jesus responds to an expert in the law of Moses. Jesus includes in the 'shema' an addition to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Lev 19,18). Jewish people practically limited this 'addition' to extending care only toward fellow Jewish citizens. Why do cultures limit and enforce cultural and social divisions of who is 'included' and 'excluded'? In your social and religious circle, who do you 'include / exclude'? Why?
- The 'law' stated that Priests and Levites were to be kept 'clean' for religious service. Getting close to a dead body or touching 'blood' would make them 'unclean'. They 'see' someone in great need - but decide to 'pass by'. Jesus critiques this socially and religiously 'acceptable behaviour'. Religious sacrifices and duties are no substitute for lack of compassion and injustice. In your week who have you 'seen', 'passed by'?
- A Samaritan was the cultural equivalent of a terrorist or drug dealer. It was the greatest shock for Jewish listeners to have a Samaritan as a hero surpassing a religiously observant Priest and Levite. The Samaritan put his money where his mouth was. His love for God showed itself in deep compassion not simply pious thoughts or words. Oil and Wine were gifts offered at the altar, used now to soften and disinfect wounds. 2 days wages and a promise of more if needed reveal not just first aid but ongoing care. What inspires you in the Samaritan's actions? What would it look like for you to 'go and do likewise'?
- Jesus challenges the lawyer - and us - to a new approach to life. The question is not 'who is my neighbour' but will I *be* a 'neighbour' ?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?