

## GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10: 30-37

Deacon George Collins

I recently heard of a High School teacher who gave his students an usual home work assignment. "Describe in writing a time in your life when you were a good Samaritan to someone." One of the students responded this way. Last summer our church planned a day for the elderly and handicapped at a local hospital. When he arrived he was overwhelmed by the sea of wheelchairs and patients. At first he saw only wheelchairs. Then he noticed someone in the wheelchair staring at his legs. That did it. He stopped seeing only wheelchairs and started to see people also. He saw a crippled woman, a paralyzed veteran, forgotten old men, and frail little kids. All were looking for someone to show an interest in them. He felt he couldn't breath and hurried away by himself. He walked around the hospital for about an hour. He became angry with God and totally confused seeing so much pain in one place. He felt more lonely than any of the patients. He was the one who needed help, not them.

But after a while, the God he vented his anger on, suddenly became more real than ever before in his life. He began to realize that God loved these people in a special way because they were so helpless. It was a strange experience, a sudden decrease in faith and a sudden increase in faith all in a matter of minutes. He returned to the place where all the patients were and began doing everything he could to make them happy. Getting them drinks and merely talking to them. It made a lot of faces glow. One face stood out above all the others; it was his own face. He said he never felt so good about himself, and never felt so happy.

The reality of this story is that none of these people were of the same faith as the high school student. They had nothing in common, yet they formed a bond because he related to them in a spirit of generosity and compassion; and they responded to him in kind. Jesus said: "If you are for me, how can you be against me?" Good works, charity and mercy accomplished for the glory of God can not separate us from others who have the same intent. All too often we become possessive of our own point of view to the exclusion of goodness. Jesus statement "if you are for me, how can you be against me?" was a full recognition of

**the goodness of others, even if they are not of our company. We are reminded that even a cup of water given in His name by anyone, will not go unrewarded, for you are acting as a prophet in His name.**

**Jesus recognized the Prophets of His time, some good, some false. Who are the prophets of today that Jesus would recognize. The young High school student who volunteered responded to that call; for we are all called to ministry by living the way we believe. This becomes a challenge, because so many believe in the way they live. That faith must bend to convenience; that it takes a back seat to other pleasures and activities of this life. These are the false prophets and false ideals. Our faith is the faith of the community, not the faith of the individual. The individual must minister to the community. The community of believers is where the treasury of faith exists.**

**It is the Church community that welcomed you into the faith at your Baptism. It was the Church community to which we professed faith in Jesus Christ at baptism. It is the Church community that guides us through this life with its' principles and doctrines of faith. It is the Church community that is the modern day prophet. It is only some individuals that leads us astray; especially the weak and helpless; who are the false prophet to whom a millstone should be tied about their necks and cast into the sea. In this context Jesus has given us a powerful lesson of what He refers to, the simple believers. He describes a radical punishment for the false prophets who destroy the vulnerable and innocent. Jesus announces to His community that the law of heaven is a good Samaritan in service to the powerless, the weak and the defenseless. In the community of God, those who strive to serve when there is no earthly reward; merely the awareness of Gods' approval. These are the true prophets, the honored ones, the future saints..**

**The Samaritan, who was an outcast of Jewish society, is the one who showed compassion. The gospel did not identify who the injured man was; but it is obvious he was a stranger. The robbers beat him and left him half dead. The Priest and the Levite were men of the strict Jewish law; to touch a dead man would cause a ritual defilement and they lived by the law. Whereas the Samaritan; a foreigner not expected to show sympathy to Jews; lived by the rule of charity and compassion. Jesus made the point that charity and compassion supersedes the law.**

**The right to eternal life is not defined by the law but by charity.**

**The High School student could feel good about himself just like the Samaritan. Some times we have to run away from a tragedy to get our bearings in order to make a decision. As Peter fled from Rome on the Appian road he had a vision of Jesus heading to Rome. Peter said "QUO VADIS?" Jesus said "I am going back to Rome to complete the work I gave to you." Peter then returned to Rome and was crucified. From this we learn to stand and face the trials that God gives us in this life to be worthy of Him. A lesson the young High Schooler learned early in life that brought him much happiness Quo Vadis; where are YOU going to find your happiness? Certainly not in prejudices or indifferences or self-centeredness!**