# Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 10th 2016

The story of the Good Samaritan is one we all know. The stranger comes to the aid of a person beaten and robbed, left at the side of the road. Others pass by, hurriedly, one would imagine, averting their eyes. But the Samaritan stops and helps. He binds the wounds, he takes him to a place of safety and pays for the care.

We all like to think that we are like the Samaritan, that in a time of emergency we would come to the aid of strangers. Jesus tells this parable after his questioner correctly says that we must love God with our whole heart and being and we must love our neighbors as ourselves. But I think the most important part of the Gospel today is how we answer the question the scholar then posed to Jesus: Who is my neighbor?

I am blessed to live in a world where, when there is a disaster or emergency, generous people open their hearts and wallets and roll up their sleeves to help those in their communities or around the world. But helping your neighbor, loving your neighbor as yourself is something we can do every day, not just when disaster strikes. Loving our neighbor is how we respond when the older retired man who always wants to talk and talk for a long time is in his yard when we are walking the dog. Do we quickly go the other way? Or do we stop and talk and spend time with our neighbor? Loving our neighbor is how we respond when the young parents with two small squirmy children sit next to us on a plane. Do we have to roll our eyes and make harried parents feel even worse? Or can we smile and offer those parents a little respite?

These everyday actions are not, perhaps, the source of parables or headlines. I believe we can all be good Samaritans by doing the small things everyday for our neighbors. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the scholar that if we follow the commandments to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves that we will live. If we follow those commandments in ways big and small, what a life we will have.

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