

## **July 13, The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **Opening Collect**

Almighty God,  
you gave your people your Law of mercy, compassion,  
and generosity to strangers,  
so that they might know how you want us to live.  
Through our Lord Jesus,  
who has fulfilled your Law in every way,  
grant that we may follow your ways of mercy and love,  
keeping your word in our mouths and in our hearts.  
We ask this through your Word, Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit is one God,  
now and for ever.

**Deuteronomy 30:10-14:** In this reading Moses reaffirms God's commitment to His people Israel. It is God who will give them the means to love Him with all their hearts. Moses exhorted them therefore to turn to the Lord with all their hearts and souls and to observe the Laws (the "10 Commandments") God had given them. What God asks, Moses tells them, is not too onerous or beyond their understanding.

Thus says the Lord: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

**Colossians 1:15-20:** Paul had told the Church at Colossae that he had heard of their deep faith ("trust") in the Lord. They are facing some sort of "deviant" teaching (perhaps to adhere to the Law?) so Paul prayed they may persevere in the faith. Our reading today is considered by many an early hymn about Christ: affirming Christ's divinity, his place in creation, his current reign, his being head of the Church, and the reconciliation he accomplished through the cross.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:  
For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:  
And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.  
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.  
For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;  
And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

**Luke 10:25-37:** Jesus had sent out his disciples on missionary journeys. Perhaps this “Lawyer” (which means an expert in the Old Testament Law, not as we understand the term) had heard of this and is confused to the point of asking Jesus must he must do. Jesus asked him what the Law says and the Lawyer responds correctly: Love God, love my neighbour. The religious leaders apparently had many loopholes which denied “neighbour status” to those they deemed unworthy, so Jesus told him a parable in which the least likely person (a despised Samaritan) is the neighbour to one whom the religious leaders would have left for dead.

A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?  
And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.  
But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?  
And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.  
And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Love God, love your neighbor. It sounds simple, right? In fact you can summarize the entire Law of Moses in one little four-letter word: Love. What could be more simple than that? Or is it that simple? Not when the Scribes and Pharisees get a hold of it. Problem wasn't the Law (which God gave) it was how the keepers of the law interpreted it.

A lawyer, an expert in the Torah, came up to Jesus in order to test Him. That was his first mistake. Test Jesus, and you yourself will be tested. He will shatter your presuppositions and topple your notions. This lawyer was an expert in biblical principles, in making the law doable, practical, relevant to today's living. He believed that with the right combination of knowledge and discipline, one could keep the law of God. And so testing Jesus he asks him the key question: What shall I do to inherit eternal life? That's the question on the table this morning with the parable of the man who fell among the thieves and the kind Samaritan who rescued him.

It's an important question, perhaps the most important question one could ask. What must I do to inherit salvation? What must I do to be saved? You might notice that there is already something wrong with the question. What does one do to inherit? Nothing. It is by grace, gratis, a gift.

Jesus never answers the question, but instead poses one in return. What does the Torah say? You're an expert in it, how do you read it? Now the tables are turned, as they always are with Jesus. Now the lawyer is the one on the stand, and Jesus is running the questions. So what does the Torah say: Love God, love your neighbor. Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus doesn't argue with him. "Bravo. Go to the head of the class. You have answered correctly.

Bang on. Now, go and do this, and you will live.” Try it for a few days and see how it works out for you. Love God with everything that you are, everything that you have, and love your neighbor as you love yourself. You’ve heard of “taking care of number one,” meaning taking care of myself. Fine. Now treat your neighbor as number one and take care of him or her, whomever he or she may be. Try it and see how it goes for you the rest of today. Then Monday. Then Tuesday and on through the week. How long do you think you could go? Could you even make it out of here in church in this morning? (Me getting in the car – that’s why no collar!)

The lawyer realizes that he’s been nailed and so tries to wriggle out of it by justifying himself. “Who then is my neighbor?” The self-justifying question, the question that seeks to get the questioner off the hook. We ask it too. What’s the least I have to do to make the grade? How often do I have to go to church? Who is this neighbor whom I am to love as myself? Is he like me? Will I like him?

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Nothing. It is given you. What may I do now that I have eternal life? Do you really need to ask?

*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

### **Concluding Prayers:**

Let us pray for our parish, for our lay and ordained ministers, for our bishop, Todd, , and for all those for whom the word of God is very near, in their mouth and in their heart. Help us to be neighbours to strangers, to people of every land and tongue and culture.

Let us pray pray for the ministry of our parish in our community, that Christ continue to hold us together as the head of his body, the Church. Help us to be neighbours to all who suffer, the lonely, the sick and the sorrowing.

Let us pray for one another as we live the gospel of Jesus Christ in our homes and neighbourhoods. Help us to be neighbours to people of every creed, to Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, Buddhists and non-believers.

Let us pray for all people of faith in our community and for those who have no faith, but are people of goodwill. Help us to be neighbours to the enemy, the alien, the despised, those with whom we disagree. .

Let us pray for Charles, our king, and our civic leaders and those who serve on various community organizations. Help us to be neighbours to everyone we pass on the road, to salespeople, co-workers, family, and passers-by.

let us pray for ourselves, that Christ might have first place in everything. Help us to be neighbours to one another, and thus to share our lives as we share your word and your supper. God of the covenant, by our baptismal vocation.

In Christ you draw near to ua,  
God of mercy and compassion,  
lifting us out of death,  
binding up our wounds,  
and nursing our spirits to health.  
Let such a tenderness  
Compel us to go and do likewise.  
We ask this through your Son  
our Lord Jesus Christ  
who with you and the Holy Spirit,  
is one God, now and for ever.

### **For our Parish.**

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful: Sanctify this parish by thine abiding presence. Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel. Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour; and those who are walking in the way of life, keep steadfast unto the end.

Give patience to the sick and afflicted, and renew them in body and soul.  
Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous.  
Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace, and make us all to be fruitful in good works; O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you  
always. *Amen*