

## Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Growing up in a dysfunctional, chaotic, or alcoholic home can feel like living in a world turned upside down. Love may have been conditional or withheld. Emotions were often ignored or weaponized. Safety, consistency, and affirmation were scarce. These wounds run deep. As adults, we may find ourselves stuck in cycles of people-pleasing, shame, distrust, or emotional disconnection. We often carry the belief that we are only lovable when we perform or that our needs are a burden. In many ways, our inner child still lies on the side of the road—battered, abandoned, and unseen.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is approached by a scholar of the law asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus turns the question back to him, and the man responds by citing the greatest commandment (Luke 10:27–28):

*"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."*

*[Jesus] replied to him, "You have answered correctly;  
do this and you will live."*

For many adult children of dysfunctional families, love—especially self-love—has been distorted or stunted. We may understand these words intellectually but find them difficult to live out emotionally. What does it mean to love ourselves when we were taught that our worth depended on others' moods or approval? How do we love our neighbor when we're still learning to set boundaries and trust?

Jesus then shares the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37):

*"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."*

This image captures the pain and beauty of our recovery journey. We were the victim on the side of the road—robbed of emotional security, perhaps even our sense of self. The priest and Levite who pass by may represent those who dismissed our pain, denied the dysfunction, or kept the family secrets. But then someone came along—a therapist, sponsor, mentor, or fellow traveler in recovery—and saw us. They didn't try to fix us. They simply stopped, acknowledged our wounds, and walked with us toward healing.

The Samaritan, a social outsider, symbolizes Christ who enters into our suffering in unexpected ways. The wine and oil are reminders of the Church's sacraments, yes, but they also point to the human kindness and compassion that help reawaken our trust. They affirm that we are not invisible. We are not beyond help.

Jesus concludes the story with a simple but challenging command: "Go and do likewise." As we begin to heal, we may be called to become Samaritans for others. This doesn't mean rescuing or reverting to codependent patterns. It means being present, honest, and kind—offering the empathy we never received. We learn that we can care without losing ourselves. We can love without controlling. And we can support others without abandoning our own needs.

This healing takes time. It requires reparenting ourselves, grieving what was lost, and learning to receive love in healthy ways. We don't have to rush the process. God's mercy meets us right where we are, and He sends others to walk with us—just as we are sent in turn. We are no longer alone on the road. And though we may not have chosen the family we came from, we are invited to choose the path of healing and love today.

- How does the image of the beaten man resonate with your experience growing up in a dysfunctional home?
- Who in your recovery journey has helped tend to your emotional wounds, and how has that changed you?
- What does "go and do likewise" mean for you as you continue healing and building healthier relationships?

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### **Sunday Mass Readings this Week**

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 30:10-14

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36, 37

**Second Reading:** Colossians 1:15-20

**Gospel:** Luke 10:25-37