

## Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Oct 8th 2018

The following is the reflection I wrote for these readings on October 4, 2010. My earlier thoughts seem as relevant to me today as they did then.

• • • • •

Dear Lord, as I reflect on the message in today's gospel, my mind and feelings go in so many directions. I echo the scholar's question: "Who is my neighbor?" As I examine my conscience, I realize I have not always been faithful to your call because I have not always responded as did the Samaritan, but instead have been like the priest and the Levite.

I have sometimes given an alms to a person standing outside the door of our downtown church, but not always. I have sometimes looked him in the eye as I gave him my money, and said "God bless you" to him, but sometimes I just have given him the bills and quickly looked away. I have sometimes said "Good morning" to an obviously homeless person on the street, but I haven't ever asked how they are doing and what I could do help them. I am conflicted about giving money to beggars, and while I am polite, I have more often rejected than responded positively to the pleas of street people asking me for a few coins.

I have stopped to help stranded motorists, but not often and usually only when it looks like they are no threat to me. I have only called 911 a few times to report a disabled vehicle alongside the road. I haven't stopped to pick up a hitchhiker in decades because I am concerned about my own safety.

I haven't always helped the people on the margins, the poor, the underemployed, the people it is easy to overlook. I get so busy in my own daily life that I forget their daily life is much more challenging, and that their struggles are for survival, while mine are for much less basic needs.

I haven't always listened with real interest when a colleague or a family member wants to talk about the problems they are facing. I nod my head, but my mind and feelings sometimes are somewhere else. I am sympathetic to their illnesses, and those of their family members, but I don't do much to lessen their suffering.

Lord, it seems like the more I become aware of what I have to lose, the more afraid I am to help the victims I see. I sometimes put my safety and protecting my possessions ahead of the needs of the hurting people I encounter. I don't always engage them with the empathy that you ask of me, and I am not always interested in helping them address what hurts them.

And so my prayer today is for the gift of Your empathy and selflessness, for the strength to let go of my possessions, my safety, my concerns, my selfishness, so I can see everyone I encounter as my neighbor, as did the Samaritan, and to soothe their hurts in whatever way I can.

• • • • •

Eight years later these challenges seem even more pressing in the world we encounter today, the needs of others even more dire, and the temptation to be complacent even stronger. I would amend my

prayer for the day to include a request for forgiveness for the times I do not respond generously.

Tom Purcel-Creighton University's Heider College of Business