

DAY 3

“Who is my neighbour?”
(Lk 10: 29)

Lord, open our hearts to those we do not see

Additional scripture passages

Romans 13:8-10

Psalm 119:57-63

Reflection

The teacher of the law wanted to justify himself, hoping that the neighbour he is called to love is one of his own faith and people. This is a natural human instinct. When we invite people to our homes, they are quite often people who share our social status, our outlook on life and our values. There is a human instinct to prefer places of familiarity. This is also true of our ecclesial communities. But Jesus takes the lawyer, and his wider audience, deeper into their own tradition by reminding them of the obligation to welcome and to love all, regardless of religion, culture or social status.

The Gospel teaches that loving those who are like ourselves is not extraordinary. Jesus steers us towards a radical vision of what it means to be human. The parable illustrates in a very visible way what Christ expects from us – to open wide our hearts and walk in his way, loving others as he loves us. In fact, Jesus answers the lawyer with another question: it is not “who is my neighbour”, but, “who proved to be a neighbour to the man in need?”

Our times of insecurity and fear confront us with a reality where distrust and uncertainty come to the forefront of relationships. This is the challenge of the parable today: to whom am I a neighbour?

Prayer

God of love,
Who write love in our hearts,
instil in us the courage to look beyond ourselves
and see the neighbour in those different from ourselves,
that we may truly follow Jesus Christ,
our brother and our friend,
who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.