

DAY 4

*When he saw him, he passed by on the other side
(Lk 10:31)*

May we never turn away from those in need

Additional scripture passages

Isaiah 58:6-9a

Psalm 34:15-22

Reflection

The priest and Levite who walk by on the other side may have had good religious reasons for not helping: they may have been ready to perform certain religious rituals and might have risked ritual defilement if the man had been dead. Yet on many occasions, Jesus is critical of religious leadership for placing the rules of religion ahead of the obligation to always do good.

The beginning of the text for the Week of Prayer tells us how the teacher of the law wanted to justify himself. The priest and the Levite in the parable would have felt justified in what they had done. As Christians, how far are we prepared to go beyond convention? Sometimes our ecclesial and culturally conditioned short-sightedness can prevent us from seeing what is being revealed by the life and witness of sisters and brothers of other Christian traditions. When we open our eyes to see how God's love is revealed by our fellow Christians, we are drawn closer to them and so are drawn into deeper union with them.

This parable of Jesus not only challenges us to do good, but also to widen our vision. We do not only learn what is good and holy from those who share our confessional or religious worldview, but often from those different from ourselves. The Good Samaritan is often the one we do not expect.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
As we journey with you towards unity,
may our eyes not look away,
but be wide open to the world.
As we travel through life,
may we stop and reach out, bind up the wounded
and in so doing experience your presence in them:
you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.