



Homily for  
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
09/10 July, 2016

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**Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....**

I. Imagine with me in your minds' eye the following situation....

You are out driving one evening...as you pull through an intersection, someone slams you from the side...there's a loud bang...air bags go off, your car spins around, comes to an abrupt stop...there's other noises. You're shocked, somehow injured, dazed, drifting in and out of consciousness, you hear voices...you're in a horrible car accident, much – unfortunately - like those we've been hearing about in our area in these first weeks of summer.

Someone has dialed 9-1-1 and almost immediately the ambulance is there. The EMTs work to get you out of the vehicle, the police are there, sirens blare and bright lights blink. You sense a crowd is starting to gather. (pause)

In that moment, do you care if the EMTs are male or female, white or black, foreign born or born here in the city? Don't you just want someone to *treat* you as a neighbor?

The emergency personnel load into the ambulance...you're drifting in and out of consciousness, but you know you're racing down the street to the hospital. They unload you into the emergency room...again, bright lights, medical personnel gather around you...they try to rouse you and ask questions...you can feel them working on your body. (pause)

Do you care what part of town they come from, whether they are gay or straight, Catholic or Moslem, Jewish or no religion at all? Do you care if the helper is a Jewish priest, a Levite or a Samaritan? Don't you welcome the help? Don't you cry out: please help me!? Anyone, please help me!?

II. When *we are* the person lying the ditch, it's pretty easy to answer that question:

"Who is my neighbor?" Well, I am – that's who – I'm the neighbor in need!

But when we are on the other side of the situation, like the scholar of the law, the question takes on a more academic tone – something theoretical – and instead of helping, we want to discuss it. This gives us the opportunity to judge about *who* to help – maybe this person, but not *that* person.

II. The problem is not a matter of "knowing" what to do. We know darn well what we're supposed to do.

Moses tells the people in the first reading they have heard the word of God.

He says it is not too mysterious for you to understand. It's not remote. It's not up in the sky someplace. It's not on the other side of sea. We don't need someone to go over there to get it for us.

***It's already in our mouths and in our hearts: all we have to do is carry it out.***

And Jesus makes the same point in the gospel. When asked by the scholar of law what must I do to inherit eternal life, Jesus asks him to tell him what's in the law: the man replies - you must love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself. The scholar already **knew** the answer to his own question.

Then Jesus tells a very pointed story illustrating for the scholar – well, go ahead and do it. The answer to the question about who is my neighbor is the person who is in the ditch. It is the person in need right in front of us.

III. “Knowing” what to do is not the problem. The problem is crossing that line from *knowing* what to do, to actually *doing* it!

I'm the kind of person who spends a lot of time thinking about things. I think I should do this and I should that. I should visit that person, call this person, work on that project, organize this plan, on and on and on. I have learned – and continue to teach myself – that I'm far better off to quit *thinking* about it and get down to brass tacks and actually do it! I should put my energy into doing it.

Each of us has spent a lot of time in group settings talking about things that

could be done – whether that’s sitting on parish committees, meetings at your place of work or gatherings with your friends and neighbors where we talk about how to solve the world’s problems.

As the old adage goes, “When all is said and done, there’s a lot more said than done.”

III. Crossing the line from “knowing” what to do to actually doing it seems to be a small step, but in reality can be a very big jump.

It’s a matter of giving ourselves the discipline required to actually take that first step and put into action what we know to be true and correct. It can begin with small steps, doing simple things and, as we gain confidence and experience, gradually expanding what we do and how we do it to live the gospel message.

IV. We’re more than half way through the Year of Mercy. Throughout this year, Pope Francis has challenged us to put into action the ideals and beliefs of our faith. He has proposed the spiritual and corporal works of mercy as very specific, tangible ways to enable us to cross that line and do what we know to be true.

So far this year we’ve had the opportunity to practice, as a parish, the corporal works of mercy to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the imprisoned and, this week, to clothe the naked. As an examination of conscience, what have you and I done to really, practically do *something* to practice these works of mercy.

This isn't theory. These aren't just nice ideas. This isn't an academic discussion.

This isn't something we hear about in church and then go home and forget it.

What if every Catholic in the world did one thing to

- feed the hungry,
- gave drink to a thirsty person
- visit one person imprisoned
- clothed one person
- or practice each of the other works of mercy in some tangible way?

What would the world look like if each Catholic practiced each of the works or mercy just once?

V. The scholar of the law asked the question, "what must I do to *inherit* eternal life."

He didn't ask what must I do to *earn* eternal life – he thought of it as an inheritance. We don't earn an inheritance: it is pure gift.

And what must we do for this gift to be given to us? Simply put into action the love we know is on our mind and in our heart. (pause)

So, this week, who is that neighbor we will find in the ditch? And what will we do about it?

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**Fr. Kyle's homily follows....**

Currently not available