



## “Who is my neighbor?”

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

In the Christian Scripture, there is the story where Jesus is being tested by a lawyer who wants to justify himself in Jesus' eyes. What must he do to enter heaven?? The answer--love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind and your neighbor as yourself. “Who is my neighbor?” asks the lawyer. Jesus tells the story of man attacked and beaten and left in a heap on the side of the road. Two important men (at least important in their own eyes) cross over so they won't have to respond to the man's plight. A man from Samaria (who would have been seen as an outsider and treated with disdain by those in Jesus' audience) comes along, picks the man up, puts him on his donkey and leaves him in the care of an innkeeper (having made a down payment for such).

In most tellings of this story that I have heard over the years, much is made of the Good Samaritan--and rightly so. There was a cost of time and treasure for him to involve himself in this man's situation, after all he was out and about his business. But recently I have thought about the innkeeper, the person who collaborated with the work of the Samaritan, extending the care and compassion that was initially offered by the Samaritan. What analogy is there for us in Catholic healthcare? One might be that the Samaritan is not alone in providing care; he enlists the help of another. And while skeptics might be quick to point out that he is being paid for such, caring for the injured guy upstairs probably interfered with his schedule of cleaning and cooking and serving. There is a second half of the story, where Jesus queries the lawyer about who was the neighbor to the injured man--the one who treated him with mercy, the lawyer replies. “Go and do likewise”, is Jesus' command. And we are called to “do likewise” on each shift, in each room, in each encounter with a patient or colleague. We are called not to walk by but to pick each other up, to share our donkey, to assist those who are vulnerable--in each and every encounter to be the embodiment of our mission statement--to be the healing presence of God in the world.