

Fifteenth Sunday Ordinary Time – C – 2019  
Dt.30.10-14///Colossians 1.15-20///Luke 10.25-37

→In 1971, the State Farm Insurance Company paid a little known trained musician... struggling to make a living in the music business...\$500 to write a jingle for their new advertising campaign...his name was Barry Manilow

→He composed a jingle using just nine notes...but those nine notes are now imbedded in our memory...

→it is the iconic tune and slogan State Farm has used as their tag line for the past 48 years.... *“Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.”*

→[and]...over the decades, State Farm’s competitors have created some of the most imaginative campaigns on television to compete with this jingle...including a little green gecko with a British accent for Geico...(along with a caveman ad campaign also), the girl next door spokesperson for Progressive named Flo, the “Mayhem” actor for Allstate and [one of my favorites] the Aflac duck....

→but for all their flash and brilliance...all these insurance companies still lag behind ...in fact...far behind...State Farm in sales and premiums in every category.

→and it is not because State Farm has the cheapest premiums...but apparently being a good neighbor still sells...it connects with American consumers

→State Farm markets itself as the company who lives in your neighborhood, and will be there *like a good neighbor* in good times and in bad.

→but State Farm is not the only one to understand the importance of being a good neighbor...because Jesus underscores this same basic principle in today’s gospel reading.

→it begins with a scholar...an expert in the law of Moses...asking Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life.

→and Jesus doesn't offer any profound or new insight... no clever or unexpected response...instead he says:

→the answer to this basic question is written in the heart of each and every human being

→an answer we all know too well...and heard many times: ***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind...AND love your neighbor as yourself.”***

→but then the scholar asks... “ and who then, is my neighbor...”

→and J. tells the story of the being a good neighbor....the very familiar parable...of the Good Samaritan.

PAUSE....

→Jesus always told parables to make his message come alive....parables are basically stories whose purpose is to surprise us....or jar us...into changing our lives...and the parable of the Good Samaritan certainly does just that.

→it is a well-known story that we have heard many times, in fact we have probably heard it so often that it has little power to surprise us

→however the key to the parable is to understand what sort of person the Samaritan was in the eyes and times of the Jewish lawyer.

→at the time of J.....a Samaritan was considered and outcast....a good-for-nothing scum of earth...who turns out to be the ONLY good neighbor....

→and after Jesus tells it...he turns the lesson upside down [if you will] on the lawyer by asking: “now.....which of these was neighbor to the man//the priest....the Levite????

→[and] the scholar can't even bring himself to answer “that it was the Samaritan,”

→he knows this all too well.....but he can't even say the words...instead he says... “it was the one who treated him with compassion and mercy”..... “he was neighbor to the one who fell in with robbers.”

→the lawyer knew who the neighbor was....it was the Samaritan

→and at the moment the lawyer learns what it means to love God with all your heart, soul and mind....AND neighbor as yourself

→because in that simple story....J....shows the lawyer what it means to love and to be a good neighbor

→and then J. tells the lawyer...*now go and do the same*....live your life as a good neighbor to others...

→because that...is what.... will gain you everlasting life

PAUSE

→I can just imagine the facial expression on the lawyer at that moment.....

→perhaps it might be the same for you and me at times when we are faced with a similar situation in our own lives.

PAUSE

→this is a story we have all heard before....it is a lesson we that we are all too familiar with

→LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

→it is a message that is very plain and simple...yet at the same time....very hard to accept and even harder at times to live....but today...Christ is urging us to be Good Samaritans towards one another....

→to respond to the needs of each other and people in our community

:to the needs of our families

:to the needs of our neighbors, our friends...our parish

:to the needs of the wider human community

→....

→THAT is what the Samaritan does in the gospel today...and THAT is what we are being challenged to do in our own lives today as well

PAUSE

→pure and simple...we are to be GOOD SAMARITANS to one another

→to continue to strive always and completely to love God and our neighbor throughout our lives...by our words and actions

→and the foundation of this love is the Eucharist...what we do here each and every week

→the Samaritan used wine and oil to bath the wounds of the man...and after transporting him to the inn...he provided bread to sustain him to whom he had become a good neighbor

→ may the bread and wine, provided to us in the this Eucharist sustain us as well so that we might always be a good neighbor to those in need...

→ to those who are hurting...to those in need of understanding and compassion

....may our hearts and minds always be open and willing....allowing us to become ...*like a good neighbor*.... a Samaritan....to ourselves and to one another .....