

## **HOMILY 15<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME**

**JULY 13, 2025**

There was a study done to investigate why people help other people in some situations and not in others. They focused upon religious values as opposed to time pressure. They wanted to find out which would have the bigger effect on helping others. The subjects of the study were seminarians. Half the group was given the assignment to give a speech on the Good Samaritan Parable; the other half was given the assignment to give a speech on their preferred job prospects. They gave them time to prepare their speeches and then they had to get to another building to give the speech. One-third of the subjects were told they were early for their time to give the speech, one-third were told that they were right on time, one-third were told that they were already late. On the way to the other building all of the students encountered someone slumped in an alleyway appearing to be in great distress. They found that the speech they were about to give had no effect on whether or not they stopped to help the student in distress. Remember, one-half of the seminarians just prepared a speech on the parable of the Good Samaritan. They found that the time factor did have an effect on whether or not they stopped to help. 63% of those who were told they were early stopped to help, 45% of those who were told they were on time stopped to help, and only 10% of those who were told they were late stopped to help. They concluded that situational factors can have a strong influence over helping behavior, potentially overriding personal beliefs or values.

We heard the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel reading today. Jesus told this parable in response to a question from a lawyer who was trying to limit the people that he would be responsible for helping. The message of the parable is that we are called to help everyone. And when we hear the parable I think most of us would like to believe that we would act as the Good Samaritan acted, but that is not always true. Two religious leaders, a priest and a Levite passed by

without helping. Now maybe they were on their way to do something very important but what exactly would be more important than helping someone who is half dead? Maybe like the seminarians in the study they were running late and the time factor became more important than helping someone in need. The time factor was one thing that prevented people from helping someone in need, but there are probably factors. Sometimes we get so focused on our plan, our schedule for the day that we ignore the other opportunities that present themselves. I think we need to make a plan for how we are going to spend our day, but maybe God has another plan for us. I try to be open to God's plan for me every day. Usually the needs of the people I encounter are not people who are half dead, but maybe it is just stopping to talk to someone in need. Maybe it is just an act of kindness that presents itself. I am usually able to fit it all in. And at times something big may come up and I have to cancel something I had planned. I think we always need to evaluate how we spend our time based upon our Christian values.

And with the polarities that exist in our country today, we have two extremes and nothing much in the middle. Are we making decisions about what we support based upon our Christian values? Have we decided that we are democrat or republican or conservative or liberal and then make decisions about what we support based upon our tribe rather than our values? My guess is that if we're really making decisions based upon our values that we would end up somewhere in the middle. Like the lawyer in the parable, have we decided that there are certain people in our country that we do not need to help? Are there groups of people that we think we need to treat them with dignity and respect? Remember in the parable the Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies, but the Samaritan still helped the Jew. We have become a country of us and them. Our lives are all interconnected. We are all in this together. There is no us and them, it is just us. Until we figure that out, we will never be able to solve the problems that exist in our country today.