

The Pretty Good Samaritan

As we move into Easter, we come with a renewed commitment to prayer, to finding God in all things and to living out our baptismal call to serve others, especially the most vulnerable among us.

As I look at the ways in which I am serving others, I am reminded of Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), which illustrates the openness, compassion, and courage it takes to serve others.



<https://unsplash.com/photos/DXPS-nc32nM>

“Homeless Man in Nashville” by Zoe Vandewater @zoejanestudios

I definitely want to be the one who sees the need, knows what to do and effortlessly tends to the downtrodden and carries on with life like this superhero Samaritan. Yet most of the time, I am the one who is scared to acknowledge someone else's need – even scared to acknowledge my own need!

I am the one who doesn't know what to do in the face someone who has been beaten into the ground, who is suffering, who is hurt and angry and grieving. I am the one who has to make great efforts to open myself to others and who struggles to carry on with life when I am aware of so much pain in the world.

As I walk with the Good Samaritan, I look at him and see that perhaps he is not much different from me. Maybe he is not the superhero swooping in on that dusty road and effortlessly tending to the broken stranger. Maybe he was just a guy minding his own business who felt stirred in his bones to help out. Maybe he was terrified at seeing the broken, bloodied stranger, unsure if the stranger was alive or dead. Maybe he had no idea what to do – just *that* he had to do something.

No doubt, tending to the stranger put a strain on the Good Samaritan. It challenged him to take on the massive needs of the stranger; it changed his travel plans; it meant he couldn't just chill at the inn but instead had to clean wounds and feed the traumatized stranger. It meant that he had to scrape together his own money, which he may not have had a lot of, to give to taking care of the stranger.

Imagining the Good Samaritan as a superhero, as a larger-than-life character, actually dishonors him and every person who reaches out to others. It also gives me an excuse to not do anything, to just walk on by, shake my head sadly, figuring it will take a superhero to cross the divide.

I am no Good Samaritan, but perhaps all I need to do is be a Pretty Okay Samaritan, an average caring person who doesn't have all the answers, but is willing to try – no matter how awkward it is, how scary it is, and yes even how bloodied and terrifying it is.

This Easter season and the renewal of our baptismal call invite us to see beyond the passion, suffering, and death and to find a place for love and new life. It won't be easy and it will likely break our hearts. Even still, we have the promise that Jesus the Christ will be with us through it all and that our every impulse to do the good and to love will bring about the fullness of the kingdom of God.

Let us remember that we don't have to be superheroes to live our baptismal call, we just have to be ourselves and love. Even as Pretty Good Samaritans, we can change the world for the better.

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