

Monroe October 3, 2022
Betty Leon, IHM
Reflection: Who is my Neighbor?

I must confess that initially I did not want to do the homily today. I had convinced myself that I had too many upcoming obligations. Then a grace came, I heard "just STOP and look at reality." I was creating unnecessary anxiety, forgetting to trust, and then noticed that I had time *that day* to work on it.

When reading the scriptures, I found that a lesson was there for me and one to share. Why does that always happen!?

The Give Us This Day reflection for today suggested that there are two big questions here for us.

First, is one we often ask ourselves, "How do I know if I am doing what God is asking of me? The gospel parable is given, "Who...was neighbor to the robbers victim?"

The second is from Paul to the Galatians: "What am I called to BE and DO in *response* to the Good news that "came through a revelation of Jesus Christ"?

The answer to both is: MERCY

And Jesus answers *us* "in the parable of our lives... It is in mercy, lived in proximity to those who are hurting." That word PROXIMITY, I looked it up.

It's defined as NEAR, NEXT, IMMEDIATE.

Detrick Bonhoeffer wrote: "(Christ) confronts us in every person we meet.

If there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbor."

When St. Thomas Aquinas was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he said, "The one in your path."

Who is the neighbor in *our path* to whom we might be merciful?

Some are obvious: those on your floor, in my house, in the book club, my family, friends, the store clerk, someone who needs assistance, and the one who helps (like when I can't reach something).

These are just a few opportunities for *mercy in action*.

You could suggest many more, I'm sure.

What is one **form** of mercy we might give to these neighbors?

I suggest, SIMPLE ATTENTION. It is a blessing in any situation.

Looking someone in the eye says, you exist, you matter.

Nothing here to agree or disagree about, not even any deep interest in the topic.

Just PRESENCE. But consciously, we make an INTENTION to pay ATTENTION.

Let's think about today. Scan through it. Where are clear opportunities to pay *attention* that will arise? Scan it... now set your *intention to pay attention*.

Also, let's pray for the grace to be awake for those moments *not* expected, the opportunities that just show up and need spontaneity to capture them. Lord, I pray to be alert. It can transform our day.

I'd like to share a poem that spoke to me of the difference *attending* makes.

"Finding What You Didn't Lose"

by John Fox

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.

When it overflows and touches your skin
you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you,
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem begins to flow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you,
your bare feet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

Prayer Seeds

Joyce Rupp pg. 128

Today, may *the light* of the Good News *beam through us*
and let us *be a blessing of mercy* to each other as neighbor. Amen.