



WORLD
DAY OF
THE SICK
11 FEBRUARY 2026

THE COMPASSION OF THE SAMARITAN: LOVING BY BEARING ANOTHER'S PAIN



HOMILY WITH A PASTORAL FOCUS

Today we have come to pray for the sick, for those who suffer in body, heart, or spirit. Therefore, in response to the theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for the 34th World Day of the Sick: "*The Compassion of the Samaritan: loving by bearing the burden of the other*," we seek to discover or recognize the light given in the Word, specifically in the Gospel. A man who gave no speeches, offered no explanations, and did not ask who the injured man was or if he deserved help. **He simply stopped.** Certainly, in this world where everything pushes us to rush, stopping is an act of love. What many sick people need most is not an immediate solution, but someone who will stop beside them, who will not rush them, who will not judge them, and who will not abandon them.

We are faced with a story told by Jesus to illustrate the experience of love, especially love for one's neighbor. This love corresponds to the love of God. It is not detached. To be consistent with the Law is to act according to the heart of God. That is what gives and guarantees life. And it is precisely a teacher of the Law who prompts Jesus' response by asking the question, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus knows who is asking and what this person understands about what is required of a Jew in fulfilling the law.

As a good teacher, he provides context as he develops the narrative. Descending from the center, from the place of importance, and traveling the road invites us to remain attentive to what is happening around us, especially the realities that require attention and a compassionate response. Thus, on the road, this nameless man, to whom the Gospel of Luke 10:30-37 refers, is more than anonymous; his person embodies humanity, especially that part of humanity that is stripped of its dignity, whose quality of life is not 100%. Because "being stripped" and "beaten" are expressions of violence of such a degree that they denigrate and attack the

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worth of someone who has also been created as a human being. If we consider this statement in the context of the sick, we can understand to what extent illness and the circumstances that accompany it strip and wound the person and their relationships.

Let's try to list possible interpretations of the latter:

- It strips bare and exposes the true self as fragile, weak, and needy.
- It reveals the difficulty in identifying and naming emotions, controlling them, and knowing how to express them.
- It exposes the breakdown of pride and self-sufficiency, making one open to receiving help.
- It challenges the ideology that governs life.
- It undermines the ability to ask for and accept help.
- It impacts the socio-economic reality, hindering effective assistance.

This means that the dejected man is seemingly a portrait of humanity lost in the hands of those who believe they have all the power in the world and use it as they please. Now, to this idea, Jesus proposes a horizon whose alternative contains values and a source that move in another direction: *humbling oneself* and *drawing near*. This call to humble oneself and draw near, although intended for everyone equally, is not always followed by everyone. Therefore, compassion must be embraced. It is a virtue and attitude that helps keep memory alive and compels us to act in accordance with reality.

This man, whose nationality at least we know, understood out of compassion that he could not remain indifferent to the suffering of another. Without knowing him, only knowing that he was human like himself, he was moved by the logic of the common good, which includes common sense: if I am in a better position and can help, why wouldn't I? Simply being human, more than just a rule-follower.

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This Samaritan **looked**. He didn't look away. He didn't say, "How sad," "What a pity," "How complicated." He looked with compassion. We know well that compassion is not pity: it is allowing the pain of another to touch my heart. Then he **approached**. Approaching implies risk, it implies time, it implies inconvenience. But it also implies dignity: the sick person ceases to be a "case" and becomes a brother again. Thus, the Samaritan **healed, carried, accompanied, paid, and promised to return**. He didn't perform an isolated act: he embarked on a journey of love and companionship.

Let us think of all our brothers and sisters limited by illness, confined to hospitals or their own homes. Turning our gaze towards them means fully engaging with their lives and their broken health. Looking at them makes their lives, their pain, their illness visible; it is connecting through the seal of goodness that God placed in human DNA. Looking at our sick brother or sister opens us to the opportunity to do good, beginning by living and allowing ourselves to be moved by compassion. We can say, then, that being moved is not a product of self-sufficiency for its own sake, but rather a conscious decision to act, aware of a greater force that invites us to what is Good, to what is Beautiful. Therefore, what follows results in gestures where attention and collaboration shine forth, to cleanse, refresh, heal, to help them regain their breath and life, strength, and confidence.

How beautiful it is when we give time and space for our sick brother or sister to allow themselves to be cared for, to the point of recovering their will to live and once again using their voice!

How wonderful when the sick person does not cease to be a subject or a brother or sister!

How wonderful when human closeness helps the healing process and not the opposite!

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Now, perhaps life will present us with several possibilities for action: we might become a beast of burden, a Samaritan, or an innkeeper with an inn. How many sick brothers and sisters need someone to "carry" them through attentive listening, helping them release what weakens and oppresses them even further? How many "Samaritans" are there who don't count the cost or the time, but instead invest in caring for those in need, and do so effectively? How many require the combined efforts of others, in the form of a network of care, to withstand loneliness and avoid succumbing to depression?

Taking out two denarii:

The greatness of the Samaritan's compassion lies in the fact that he invested it to gain life by restoring it in the other person who was mistreated and dejected. It is not known whether what he paid the innkeeper was all he had. What is known is that he did not hesitate to invest in the man's care, promising to settle any other possible debt if necessary. Guaranteeing a safe place to heal, the right conditions, and qualified personnel is part of this investment in humanity and quality of life. Health is a universal right, so for the care to be truly humane and healing, those responsible for healthcare must ensure that there are sufficient resources, adequate conditions, and trained and fairly compensated personnel so that there are no gaps or deficiencies in what should be a team effort in favor of the health and well-being of so many sick people.

We may not be able to heal bodies, but we can heal hearts. We may not be able to solve everything, but we can be there. And sometimes, simply being there is the most healing miracle of all...