

**Tuesday March 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Today's Practice:** Turn off your newsfeed until after 6 pm.

[from *40 Ideas for Keeping a Holy Lent* from Nadia Bolz-Weber, the founding Pastor at House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, Colorado — an urban liturgical community with a progressive yet deeply rooted theological imagination. Learn more at [www.houseforall.org](http://www.houseforall.org) and [www.nadiabolzweber.com](http://www.nadiabolzweber.com) ]

**Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

**Meditation: The Rev. Austin K Rios, St. Paul Within the Walls, Rome** (*Social Justice Bible Challenge*, pp. 116-17)

"Who is my neighbor?"

A simple question. And yet for the lawyer who tests Jesus, and for many of us, the answer is never simple. The one most different from the wounded man shows him mercy, while the most prominent members of his community fail to do so. I wince at the difficulty the lawyer has in even acknowledging the Samaritan, referring to the man as "the one who showed him mercy." His failure to see their human connection threatens to keep the lawyer from the fullness of the eternal life he seeks. Jesus invites this man—and you and me—into a broader vision of community, responsibility, identity. . . .

I live and work in Rome, Italy, a city and nation at the nexus of the global refugee crisis. As droves of asylum seekers reach the Italian shores in battered boats, European Union policy makers and everyday citizens struggle to respond. Are these desperate, predominantly Muslim refugees our neighbors? What does it mean to show them mercy? The Joel Nafuma Refugee Center is one of the ways our church has chosen to respond.

The question of "Who is my neighbor" is larger than this [current refugee] crisis. I submit that our answer determines how much we experience the promise of eternal life in the here and now. If we, like the lawyer, believe that our love and mercy should be directed only inward—toward members of our own tribe and only those who share our beliefs—then we experience isolation more hellish than heavenly. If, on the other hand, we recognize that God's mercy flows across all divides, we more readily become good neighbors and pass over the stumbling block of divisions in order to extend the mercy we have received freely and widely to all,

The Rev. Dr. Judith Lee  
Interim Pastor  
Grace Church/La Gracia Episcopal Church  
33 Church Street  
White Plains, NY 10601  
[www.gracechurchwhiteplains.org](http://www.gracechurchwhiteplains.org)  
914.949.2874  
cell:716.949.8194