

THE GOOD SAMARITAN & THE PLENARY
15th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – 10 JULY 2022



THE PLENARY

In praying for the Plenary this week, I picked up the Bible and turned to chapter 8 of the Acts of the Apostles. It is an account of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of Samaritan people and of Philip who shared the Good News with them.

I chose that reading partly because this weekend's Gospel passage from Luke, is about Jesus telling a parable of a Good Samaritan.

The same evangelist wrote both Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles.

The Gospel of Luke tells us of the life and mission of Jesus.

The Acts of the Apostles tells us how the early church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continued this mission amid the challenges they faced.

I also chose the passage in Acts of the Apostles as an act of trust in the Holy Spirit who would show a way forward for the Plenary Council Assembly.

The Plenary Council is like the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The Spirit inspired people to come to the aid of the church deeply in need of healing and reform. Wednesday morning this past week, was a crisis time at the Plenary.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday became a time of courage and prayer and revised process.

Thank you to the Good Samaritans who had the courage to challenge the church, and seek a way forward.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CHAPTER 8

What wonders will come from the Plenary in the years ahead?

If the Church remains true to its commitments this week, then we turn to the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 8 to see the wonders of God's Spirit in action.

Like Philip, we are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

“Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralysed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city.”

“... But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Like at the Plenary Council, the apostles were to verify the working of the Good News, and to participate fully in its workings.

“... Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

“... Now after Peter and John had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.”

GOSPEL OF LUKE 10:25-37

Jesus had begun the final journey up to Jerusalem where he would suffer, die and rise from the dead. He was focused.

A lawyer set out to test Jesus.

Jesus drew the response from him:

“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 neighbour as yourself.’ “

Jesus affirmed his quotation and invited him to live it out in his life.

“And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’ “

Gospel continues with another question from the lawyer:

‘But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’”

Jesus knew the strain of relationships between Jew and Samaritan.

In the parable, the Samaritan breaks down the cultural and religious divide between Samaritan and Jew, to offer practical help and mercy to the last person you would expect him to help.

You would expect the priest to help, but he passed by on the other side.
You would expect the Levite to help, but he passed by on the other side.
You would expect the Samaritan to pass by, but he stopped to help and offered follow-up support.

The parable was set in Jewish territory.
The man injured and half-beaten to death was in his own country.
The Samaritan was only travelling through.
The Samaritan set out in compassion, in love, in charity, to help the man heal.
He was moved with compassion. With courage he approached him.

As the Parable says

*"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." "*

THREE-FOLD PARTNERSHIP

There is a three-fold partnership in the parable.

1. *The survivor of the terrible robbery and beating,*
who accepts practical help from a religious and cultural 'rival'.
2. *The Samaritan traveller,*
who cares immediately for the survivor, transports him to the inn,
arranges for his care, and promises to return on his way through
and pay for any other expenses incurred.
3. *The innkeeper,*
who is trusted to continue the care for the survivor,
and who trusts the Samaritan traveller to reimburse him on possible extra expenses.

*Inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan,
like the survivor, the Samaritan and the innkeeper, and in our love for God,*
may we move to implement the Plenary decisions over the next five years,
and build **partnerships** to love our neighbour, and to love our common home, the earth.

All motions were eventually passed in some form, except for one motion.

The Plenary Council final votes are at:

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/motions-and-voting/>

The *eight major parts* of the Plenary are:

1. Reconciliation: Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts
2. Choosing Repentance - Seeking Healing
3. Called by Christ - Sent Forth as Missionary Disciples

4. Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Women and Men
5. Communion in Grace: Sacrament to the World
6. Formation and Leadership for Mission and Ministry
7. At the Service of Communion, Participation and Mission: Governance
8. Integral Ecology and Conversion for the Sake of Our Common Home

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/071022.cfm>



The Good Samaritan by Vincent Van Gogh