

Missionary Commentary

Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

July 13, 2025

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Psalm 69:14, 17, 33-37

Colossians 1:15-20

Luke 10:25-37

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Celebrating God's Boundless Mercy

The Name of God is Mercy was the first book of Pope Francis after his election to the papacy on March 13, 2013. Pope Francis continually insists that mercy is the very essence of God; he expresses it this way: “we can say that **mercy is God's identity card**, God of Mercy, merciful God. For me, this really is the Lord's identity.” Although a vast amount of “mercy material” from Pope Francis is available, probably the best source is Francis' document, *Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy)* [April 11, 2015]. Francis says: “We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.... Mercy [is] the bridge that connects God and man” (MV 2).

God, Father of Mercy. Scripture clearly affirms that God is “the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation” (2 Cor 1:3). Our God is “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4), *Dives in Misericordia*. One of Jesus' best-known parables is that of the “merciful father” (though often known as the parable of the prodigal son): Lk 15:11-32. The magnanimous father shows his overflowing love, mercy and compassion to *both* of his sons. Today's Gospel narrates the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan, a vivid story of mercy and compassion.

Jesus, Face of the Father's Mercy. In Jesus of Nazareth, mercy has become living and visible. Jesus' entire life and “his person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously.... His mercy overflows when he invites Matthew the tax collector to follow him; he looked at Matthew with merciful love and chose him: *miserando atque eligendo* [Francis' episcopal motto] (Mt 9:9). Jesus spoke many parables devoted to mercy: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father with two sons (Lk 15:4-7, 8-10, 11-32).

Church, Community of Mercy. “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love” (MV 10). “The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (MV 12).

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Mary, Mother of Mercy. “My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy.... No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh.... She treasured divine mercy in her heart.... Her hymn of praise [Lk 1:46-55] was dedicated to the mercy of God.... At the foot of the cross, Mary, together with John, the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him shows us the point to which the mercy of God can reach” (MV 24).

Conclusion. The final words of today’s Gospel of merciful compassion continue to echo in our minds and hearts: “Go and do likewise.”

Notes on the Readings

First Reading – Deuteronomy 30:10-14

This scripture passage from Deuteronomy, written in oratorical style, is Moses’ farewell address for future generations. He explains to the people that God’s commandment is not hard to know, since it is “very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts.” He enjoins us: “you have only to carry it out.”

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 69:14, 17, 33-37

This psalm exhorts us: “Turn to the Lord in your need and you will live.” With trusting hearts, we pray: “Answer me, O Lord, for bounteous is your kindness: in your great mercy turn toward me.”

Second Reading – Colossians 1:15-20

Paul’s letter is addressed to the Christian community at Colossae, a small town in southwest Asia Minor. Some strange, heretical ideas that focused on an “angelic astrology” were spreading; they questioned the centrality of Christ. Thus, here we read one of the great New Testament passages on the central preeminence of Christ.

Gospel – Luke 10:25-37

Today’s Gospel from Luke contains one of Jesus’ most memorable parables; in fact, the expression “good Samaritan” has entered into common usage in many languages. To better understand this story, remember that in Jesus’ time the Jews and Samaritans hated one another totally, due to historical, racial, geographic, and religious reasons. Therefore, this parable provides a truly powerful lesson about authentic mercy and compassion.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who has recently published [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books) as well as [Exploring Vatican II Treasures: Actors, Events, Insights and A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis](#) (Faith Alive Books).

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