

**Who Is Our Neighbor?**      Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time      Monday,  
October 3, 2016    8:15 AM    Gal 1:6-12;    **Lk 10:25-37**    (Do we actually want to justify  
ourselves and defend our habits of thought and action?)

**“He answered, ‘The one who treated him with mercy.’”** The answer to the question of  
**“Who is the neighbor?”**

**So who has been your neighbor in the past week, in the past month? And are you  
willing to do likewise?**

What this story is about is about **reciprocity. Being a neighbor creates an atmosphere  
where people can live and thrive.** The opposite of being a neighbor is either indifference or  
fear—they go together. **People become indifferent because they are afraid for themselves.**  
The priest and the Levite of course had to follow the holiness code. They couldn’t touch blood  
and remain holy, much less could they touch a dead body and remain holy. **The idea of holiness  
that Jesus had to constantly deal with was an idea of self-protection, segregation,  
separation, closing off from a world of contamination and wickedness and gentility.**

But Jesus knew very well that this scholar of the Law knew better. In fact the odd thing  
about Luke’s gospel is it’s the scholar of the Law who puts together “Love God with your whole  
heart, mind, and soul,” from Deuteronomy with “Love you neighbor as yourself,” from  
Leviticus. **In Matthew, it’s Jesus that puts those together. In Luke, it’s the scholar of the  
Law,** which is quite unlikely actually. It’s, I believe, unique to the gospel, so I don’t think a  
scholar of the Law would’ve actually thought to do that—but maybe, you never know. **Maybe  
the Holy Spirit was operative in the scholars of the Law as well: enlightening and leading  
and guiding and suggesting.**

At any rate the point is that he knew quite well what to do and **he knew quite well how to  
behave, but he didn’t really want to do it.** He wanted to justify a certain way of living. So it  
says here, “but wanting to justify himself.” **Do we actually want to justify ourselves and  
defend our habits of thought and action?**