

“The Son of Man has come to seek
and to save what was lost.”

Luke 19:10

Mercy

One Church, Encountering Jesus,
Equipping Disciples, and **Living Mercy**

Week One: Love of Enemies

Psalm 145:8-13

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in mercy.
The LORD is good to all,
compassionate toward all your works.
All your works give you thanks, LORD
and your faithful bless you.
They speak of the glory of your reign
and tell of your mighty works,

Making known to the sons of men
your mighty acts,
the majestic glory of your rule.

Your reign is a reign for all ages,
your dominion for all generations.

The LORD is trustworthy in all his words,
and loving in all his works.

Conversation Starter

1. Who do you know that you would consider a very merciful person?
2. What most inspires you about the way they live mercy?



The Crucifixion, seen from the Cross, c.1890 (James Tissot)

Week One:
Love of Enemies

WRAP* with the Gospel - Luke 6:27-36

But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful.

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

*WRAP is an acronym and method for Lectio Divina from the book WRAP Yourself In Scripture © by Karen & Lawrence Dwyer published by The Institute for Priestly Formation (2011, 2018). The WRAP Method involves four steps: Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray with Scripture.

Week One:
Love of Enemies

Going Deeper Questions

1. How did Jesus demonstrate by his own example his teachings about mercy?
2. What is most challenging for you personally about Jesus' teaching to love your enemies?

Group Action

Think of a person you have a broken or strained relationship with. This week, spend extra time in prayer asking the Lord to show his kindness to that person.

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compassionate toward all your works.
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They speak of the glory of your reign
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Making known to the sons of men
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the majestic glory of your rule.

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your dominion for all generations.

The LORD is trustworthy in all his words,
and loving in all his works.

Week Two: To Seek and To Save

Psalm 145:14-19

The LORD supports all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look hopefully to you;
you give them their food in due season.
You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The LORD is just in all his ways,
merciful in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.
He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

Conversation Starter

1. What do you think it means for God to be merciful?
2. Have you ever had a concrete experience of God's mercy in Confession? What was that like?



Zacchaeus in the Tree, (Greek Orthodox Icon)

Week Two:
To Seek and To Save

WRAP with the Gospel - Luke 19:1-10

He came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 284: 2689-2695.

1. What can we learn from this passage about forgiveness, reconciliation, and restitution for sin?
2. Jesus says that his mission is “to seek and to save what was lost”. What does this mean to you?

Commit individually to receiving the sacrament of reconciliation in the next week. As a group, identify confession times in your parish or a neighboring parish. You can use the examination of conscience included as an appendix to prepare.

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and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look hopefully to you;
you give them their food in due season.
You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The LORD is just in all his ways,
merciful in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

Week Three: The Prodigal Son

Psalm 103:1, 11-13, 18

Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
For as the heavens tower over the earth,
so his mercy towers over those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion
on those who fear him.
of those who keep his covenant,
and remember to carry out his precepts.

Conversation Starter

1. Have you ever hidden from God's mercy or been jealous of the mercy he has given to others?
2. Is there a particular area of your life, a memory, a habit, a relationship, etc. that you want to bring before the Lord's mercy?



Return of the Prodigal Son, c.1661-1669 (Rembrandt)

Week Three:
The Prodigal Son

WRAP with the Gospel - Luke 15:11-24

Then he said, “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’ So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began.

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Three: **The Prodigal Son**

Going Deeper Questions

1. Why do you think the father was so quick to see his son coming from a long way off?
2. What does this tell us about God's disposition toward us when we have sinned and turned our backs to him?

Group Action

Some time in the next couple days, return to this Gospel passage and pray with it alone. Return to the Father, and open your heart to receive his mercy at a deeper level.

Psalm 103:1, 11-13, 18

Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
For as the heavens tower over the earth,
so his mercy towers over those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion
on those who fear him.
of those who keep his covenant,
and remember to carry out his precepts.

Week Four: **Pardon of the Sinful Woman**

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the LORD
is upon those who fear him,
upon those who count on his mercy,
To deliver their soul from death,
and to keep them alive through famine.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
he is our help and shield.
For in him our hearts rejoice;
in his holy name we trust.
May your mercy, LORD, be upon us;
as we put our hope in you.

Conversation Starter

1. What is one thing you are most grateful for this past week?
2. How have you noticed God's presence in the past week?



Forgiven, c. 1965 (Daniel Gerhartz)

Week Four:
Pardon of the Sinful Woman

WRAP with the Gospel - Luke 7:36-50

A Pharisee invited him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days’ wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?” Simon said in reply, “The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven.” He said to him, “You have judged rightly.” Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.” He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The others at table said to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” But he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Four:
Pardon of the Sinful Woman

Going Deeper Questions

1. What would you say is the connection between mercy and gratitude?
2. What can you do to cultivate gratitude in your own heart?

Group Action

Spend 10 minutes looking at an image of Jesus hanging on the cross, considering how he sacrificed himself out of love for *you*.

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the LORD
is upon those who fear him,
upon those who count on his mercy,
To deliver their soul from death,
and to keep them alive through famine.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
he is our help and shield.
For in him our hearts rejoice;
in his holy name we trust.
May your mercy, LORD, be upon us;
as we put our hope in you.

Week Five: **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

Psalm 145:1-7

I will extol you, my God and king;
 I will bless your name forever and ever.
 Every day I will bless you;
 I will praise your name forever and ever.
 Great is the LORD and worthy of much praise,
 whose grandeur is beyond understanding.
 One generation praises your deeds to the next
 and proclaims your mighty works.

They speak of the splendor of your majestic glory,
 tell of your wonderful deeds.
 They speak of the power of your awesome acts
 and recount your great deeds.
 They celebrate your abounding goodness
 and joyfully sing of your justice.

Conversation Starter

1. Who in your life do you wish you treated with greater mercy?
2. What is currently preventing you from doing this?



The Rich Man and the Poor Lazarus, c. 1625 (Hendrick ter Brugghen)

Week Five:
The Rich Man and Lazarus

WRAP with the Gospel – Luke 16:19–31

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Five:
The Rich Man and Lazarus

Going Deeper Questions

1. In your experience, what makes showing mercy easy, joyful, and peaceful?
2. In your experience, what makes showing mercy easy, joyful, and peaceful?

Group Action

Schedule a one-on-one meeting with your group leader to pray WRAP together and talk about what you are taking away from this small group study so far.

Psalm 145:1-7

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I will bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you;
I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and worthy of much praise,
whose grandeur is beyond understanding.
One generation praises your deeds to the next
and proclaims your mighty works.

They speak of the splendor of your majestic glory,
tell of your wonderful deeds.

They speak of the power of your awesome acts
and recount your great deeds.

They celebrate your abounding goodness
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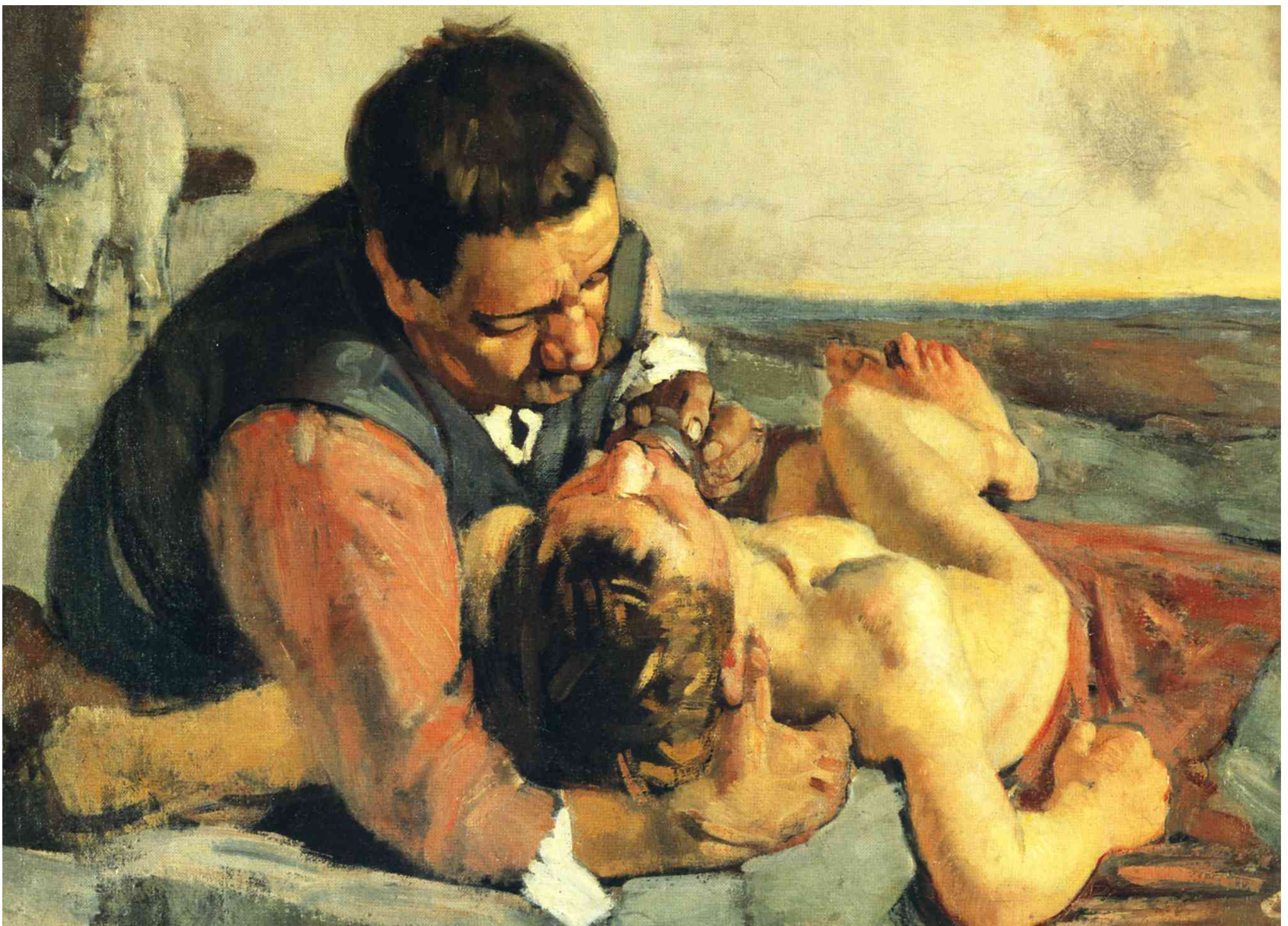
Week Six: The Good Samaritan

Psalm 112:4-9

<p>Light shines through the darkness for the upright; gracious, compassionate, and righteous. It is good for the man gracious in lending, who conducts his affairs with justice. For he shall never be shaken; the righteous shall be remembered forever. He shall not fear an ill report;</p>	<p>his heart is steadfast, trusting the LORD. His heart is tranquil, without fear, till at last he looks down on his foes. Lavishly he gives to the poor; his righteousness shall endure forever; his horn shall be exalted in honor.</p>
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Conversation Starter

1. How would you summarize your conversations about mercy up to this point in the lectio series?
2. What questions do you still have that you want to bring to the Lord and to this group?



The Good Samaritan, c. 1885 (Ferdinand Hodler)

Week Six:
The Good Samaritan

WRAP with the Gospel - Luke 10:25-37

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” The Parable of the Good Samaritan. But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Six:
The Good Samaritan

Going Deeper Questions

1. What does it mean to be a good neighbor according to the Gospel?
2. What do you think enable the good Samaritan to respond so readily and with such generosity when he encountered suffering?

Group Action

This week, tell someone (a friend, family member, co-worker, etc) about how you have encountered Jesus and the difference that encounter has made in your life.

Psalm 112:4-9

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gracious, compassionate, and righteous.
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the righteous shall be remembered forever.
He shall not fear an ill report;

his heart is steadfast, trusting the LORD.
His heart is tranquil, without fear,
till at last he looks down on his foes.
Lavishly he gives to the poor;
his righteousness shall endure forever;
his horn shall be exalted in honor.



Archdiocese *of* Omaha