



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday's Gospel concerns the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. When a lawyer desired to test Christ by asking Him, "Who is my neighbor?" our Lord offered the story of a man in need (*Luke 10:29*). "*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.*" (*Luke 10:30*) A Levite and a Priest pass by the man, because, as keepers of God's Law, they assume the man is dead, and they know that to touch any dead thing would make them unclean.

But, our Lord says, a Samaritan came "*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*" (*Luke 10:34*). Now, we hear the parable as judgement on those who hold to the Letter of the Law, rather than the Spirit; but there is deeper way to understand this parable as a symbol of the

relationship between Christ and His Holy Church.

The man in the parable symbolizes humanity and His journey in this case, is not from Jerusalem to Jericho, but through all of life. On this journey, we are each tempted and attacked by the Evil One, as the man was by the robbers. When we sin, our souls and bodies are harmed, and we are left weak and in need. The Priest and the Levite, like in the Parable, are unable to provide salvation through the letter of the Law.

Instead, salvation comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ, who like the Good Samaritan, is "the physician of our souls and bodies", offering us the wine of the New Covenant and the oil of God's Grace. The inn is the Church, and only in this interpretation, does of the Samaritan's promise to the innkeeper takes on its deepest meaning: "*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.'*" (*Luke 10:35*) The two denarii represent Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and though we read the Samaritan's words as a prophesy of Christ's *Parousia*, I believe that they are not only addressed to those Priests and Hierarchs, who are responsible for those who come to the "inn".

Indeed, all Christians will be held to account for how they made use of the two denarii given to each of us at our Baptism. Will we, like the Priest and the Levite, believe our status as Christians justifies us; or, like our Lord & the figure of the Good Samaritan, will we seek to fulfill our responsibilities, ministering and giving to those in need?

+ALEXIOS
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