



## Ambassadors of a **WORLDWIDE BROTHERHOOD**

### MEDITATION 3: COMPASSION

After vocation and commitment, we will now dwell at the third oasis: compassion. Besides Brotherhood, Compassion is a keyword in the spirituality of the Brothers CMM. On the road that we go with God and each other, compassion is a major lifestyle. The Gospel according to Luke shows us the importance of compassion in following Jesus on his way. Today we will read the story of the Good Samaritan.

- **Lectio: THE GOOD SAMARITAN (Luke 10,25-37) [CEV]**

An expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Jesus a question to see what he would say. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered,

"What is written in the Scriptures? How do you understand them?"

The man replied,

"The Scriptures say, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.' They also say, 'Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.' "

Jesus said,

"You have given the right answer. If you do this, you will have eternal life."

But the man wanted to show that he knew what he was talking about. So he asked Jesus, "Who are my neighbors?"

Jesus replied:

As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. Later a temple helper came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side.

A man from Samaria then came traveling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said,

"Please take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return."

Then Jesus asked,

"Which one of these three people was a real neighbor to the man who was beaten up by robbers?"

The teacher answered,

"The one who showed pity."

Jesus said,

"Go and do the same!"

- **Meditatio**

In the Gospel of Luke, compassion is a major theme. The text deals with the theory of compassion and also gives some practical examples. The theory of compassion can be found especially in the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6.20 to 7.1). This sermon contains the program for life that Jesus gives to his disciples. Central words in this speech are the following: Be merciful as your Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). Jesus gives us three clues to understand this saying: 1. Love your enemies. 2. Treat others in the way you want to be treated by them. 3. With the measure you are measuring, you will be measured yourself.

Jesus leaves the initiative to his students. The question is not what others are or how they act, but what the pupil is and how he acts. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us how this can be made concrete. The scholar asks: Who is my neighbor? Jesus answers: for who *you* are a neighbor? This reversal is very typical of Jesus' ministry and teaching. It is not about passively waiting for what God may do for me. Compassion is an active deed.

The beauty of this story is that it shows how compassion can be found in a single man. We find three verbs: to see, to be moved and to move. In the translation we read: 'He felt sorry for him'. That is in fact a superficial translation. Another translation is: 'He was compassionate'. The Samaritan was touched in the depths of his feelings. His intestines revolted. He could not bear the sight. A deep physical reaction was the result of seeing this crime. And that motivates him to help the victim.

We also see the three sayings of Jesus come to life. Samaritans were enemies of Jews. But this guy breaks the wall of hostility. He treats the victim as he would be treated if he was being victimized himself. And he measures with a measure that helps. He gives two denari: the wage that a laborer can earn in two days.

*We now read the text again*

- **Contemplatio**

*After each part of the following text, we will be silent for a moment. At the end there is a silence of 10 minutes, ending with instrumental music.*

1. Love your enemies

This commandment is repeated by Jesus three times. It is also the center of the Sermon on the Plain. The Good Samaritan brings this into practice. He won't leave his enemy lying on the side of the road. He offers us a mirror to look at ourselves. Hostility is deeply rooted in our human actions. It is oppositional of what Jesus asks of us. Therefore the question is: how do we deal with our enemies? How can we cope with our feelings of hostility?

2. Treat others in the way you want to be treated by them

What Jesus tells us sounds easy and obvious. That it is not that obvious, can be seen in the actions of the priest and the Levite. They see and ignore. They are not affected. Where are their feelings for others? How would you want to be treated? And how do you use that feeling to deal with others?

3. With the measure you are measuring, you will be measured yourself

These words are asking for your generosity. And they ask how you see others. How fast is your judgment? How generous are you to people? And how often do you lack others? If you know how God deals with you, what does that mean for your dealing with others?

4. To see

Seeing is an important issue in biblical stories. Also this story is about seeing. Seeing is looking at the world with a faithful glance. Seeing is knowing that God sees you. Seeing is opening yourself for your brothers and sisters. What do you see? How do you see? Are you paying attention? What do you really see? Do you only see what you want to see? Do you also see the things and the people who are not interesting at first sight? Do you see what is lying at the side of the road? Do you see those who ended in the margins of society?

5. To be moved

When are you being moved? The Samaritan could not bear the suffering of the other. He is touched, down to the depths of his feelings. Which incidents can touch you? What makes you sick? What suffering makes you lying awake in the night?

6. To act

Seeing and being moved require a third point. The first two are probably still passive; you see and you're moved. But now the question is: do you act? How can you use your talents? How can you help to ease the suffering you see? It does not necessarily have to be a magnificent act. The Samaritan just came along the road and went into action for what he saw at that time. What do you see along the side of the road? Is there suffering or injustice in your neighborhood? And how do you want to act?

7. Being a neighbor to the other

Jesus turns around the question of the scribe. The scholar asked: Who is my neighbour? Jesus asks him: to whom would you be a neighbour? Showing compassion is true brotherhood and sisterhood. To whom do we want to be a sister, a brother? What acts will help us to realize brother- and sisterhood in our neighbourhood?

- **Collatio (sharing)**

1. Which mission did you take during the last meeting? What did you do with it in your daily life?
2. Discuss the words of Jesus: love your enemies. What does this mean to you?
3. 'Seeing – being moved – acting' is the program of compassion. How can this triad fit in your life?
4. 'Be a neighbour to the other'. Can you tell about some moments in your life, in which you acted like this?

- **Oratio (praying)**

Be compassionate as God is. What do you ask God, in order to be like Him?

What need, what injustice, and what suffering in your own neighbourhood do you want to submit to God?

- **Creatio (creative process)**

'Seeing – being moved – acting'. What do you see around you? What touches you, what is moving you? What is your reaction to this: how do you act?

We ask each ambassador to make a triptych (three photos or drawings) in which these three elements are depicted. We then share with each other why you chose these images.

Arrange the pictures on the ambassador's Facebook page to share them with other ambassadors in the world.

An example:



- **Operatio (making concrete plans)**

Read the entire Sermon on the Plain (in Luke 6:20 to 7:1). Write down what you find difficult to understand or what strikes you.

Try to look at the world with the eyes of God. You can do so by paying attention to every person around you, and by living careful: see, hear and feel. Does your dealing with others change?

What can you do in your daily life, with what you've discovered in meditation and in conversations with others today?

Your plan will be discussed in the next meeting's sharing.