

GOSPEL PEARLS

True charity

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05_10_2020



On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes,

beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10: 25-37)

The Good Samaritan acts with the sort of kindness unknown to the two Jewish pious believers who precede him. If we consider acts of piety more important than actually loving our neighbor, then we should know that they can become aggravating factors in God's Judgment of us. It is interesting to note that the Good Samaritan takes care of the needy man's expenses out of his own pocket. He does not use public money, as hypocrites who only know how to talk the talk might do. Let us try to remember this parable when we are preparing to be good Samaritans not to carry out acts of pretentious charity which are absolutely useless for gaining eternal life.