

JPIC Animation: Parable of the Good Samaritan

Hand-out for facilitating reflection in small groups:

Cut and give each group one section to work with.

1 The priest



The priest decides not to be affected and to pass by on the other side.

- What influences him to ignore the wounded person?
 - Is it indifference with regard to the suffering of others?
 - Is he not ready to let himself be disturbed by the unforeseen?
 - Does he allow distrust, fear or disgust dominate his feelings?
 - Is he preoccupied by his tasks and activities?
 - Is he imprisoned by his past, by rules, by taboos?
 - Does he practise mutual aid only among his own community - his family, his group and clan, friends, his own ethnic group, religion or nationality, thereby excluding those who are not member of it, i.e. the foreigner ...?
- What are the obstacles that could blind us to the suffering of others?

2a The samaritan



The Samaritan is attentive and he is pushed to act compassionately action towards the victim of violence.

- What impels him to approach the injured person and to accept this face to face encounter? What motivates him?
 - Pity? Compassion? Charity? Conviction? Duty? Faith?
- Why is he more receptive, open to showing more empathy to suffering?
- What could motivate us to help people in distress?

2b At the inn



The Samaritan gives financial support. He goes a step further.

- What motivates him to do more?
 - Is it his sense of sharing?
- Why does he give without interest (freely), without waiting for a return ("reciprocity"), without calculating (return), without hoping for recognition?
- What spirit motivates us to help others? What are the risks and temptations we might face?

3a Insecurity and ensuring safety



The bandits return to crime. The insecurity on the road persists. Crime is becoming endemic.

- Where does the problem lie?

3b Insecurity and ensuring safety



- What can be done to make the road safe?
 - What are the obstacles to be overcome?
- How can we combat crime?
 - Who must be active ?
 - How can we guarantee security?

4a The captured criminals



Criminals who are caught must be judged. Institutions are needed that guarantee the fairness of the legal process: existing laws and their application; competent and well-trained staff (judges, lawyers...). Normally, this is guaranteed in a constitutional state.

4b Corruption



Criminals are freed from prison without going on trial because of corruption. There is no follow up, also because of corruption. There is a need to combat bribery.

- What kind of person is most likely to act corruptly?
- What can we do when the whole system is corrupt : the executive system, the legal system, etc.?

5 Arms sellers



Criminals use stolen money for buying arms

- Who has an interest in ensuring that insecurity continues? Who profits?
- Who has an interest in selling arms?
- Who facilitates the procurement of arms?
- What can be done against selling arms and the arms trade?

6a Other bandits



There are gangsters who intimidate and threaten travellers in order to get money.

6b The background to the life of some criminals



- What might be the possible causes for people to commit crimes?
- What are the reasons for criminal behaviour?
 - Are people pushed by extreme poverty and unemployment?
 - Could they find other ways to guarantee the daily survival of their family?

7 Civil engagement:



There are social structures which are inequitable, and these must be considered. Citizens have the chance to get organized, to make known injustices and to form pressure groups for change and transformation.

- What are the means which can be used for awareness raising, applying pressure, networking and for bringing change and transformation to the situation?

“Who is my neighbour?”

“We are not born to be a neighbour; we become one, by choice and/or by a decision. Nobody is born a neighbour, but everybody can become one!” (Enzo Bianchi, *Raconter l’amour, Fidélité*, 2016, p.24)

Are you a neighbour? Do you act like a neighbour?

The Other who is close:

- I am not asked who is my neighbour, but I am asked to become a neighbour to the Other by stepping outside myself, by looking at the Other face to face, by putting my hand in the Other’s hand, my cheek against the Other’s cheek. (Enzo Bianchi, p.34)
- The Other is a face and this face is a mirror challenging me, opposing the selfishness living in me, calling me to be responsible for the Other.

The Other who is far away:

- We are conscious of “the suffering of the world, suffering due to poverty, to violence, to structural injustice, to oppression. We are aware that there is a cry rising to God from the misery and oppression of millions of men and women.” (Enzo Bianchi, p.42-43)

“Jesus did not first look at the sin of others, but to the suffering of others. Sin, in his eyes, was above all a refusal to share in the pain of others (...), it was, as Augustine defined it, 'the withdrawal of the heart in on itself'” J.B. Metz

Become attentive - be ready - act

“If our vision is not educated to recognize the injustice or the suffering of others, we will never be able to see their situation as a challenge, calling for action to remedy it.” (Alain Thomasset, *Les vertus sociales*, Lessius, 2015, p.184)

"It is not only by carefully observing reality that will allow us to feel for the Other, but it is an attitude that leads us to respond to the needs of suffering through effective action. (ibid, p.186)

Text of social teaching of the catholic church:

“To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity. To take a stand for the common good is, on the one hand, to be solicitous for and, on the other hand, to avail oneself of that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society - juridically, civilly, politically and culturally - making it the pólis, or “city”. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the pólis. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the pólis.” (Pope Benedict, *Caritas in Veritate*, n°7)

Text of social teaching of the catholic church:

“Evangelii gaudium – The joy of the gospel”

The social dimension of evangelisation: chapter 4, n°176 - 258

182. It is no longer possible to claim that religion should be restricted to the private sphere and that it exists only to prepare souls for heaven. We know that God wants his children to be happy in this world too, even though they are called to fulfilment in eternity, for he has created all things “for our enjoyment” (1 Tim 6:17), the enjoyment of everyone. It follows that Christian conversion demands reviewing especially those areas and aspects of life “related to the social order and the pursuit of the common good”. [149]

183. Consequently, no one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of civil institutions, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society. Who would claim to lock up in a church and silence the message of Saint Francis of Assisi or Blessed Teresa of Calcutta? They themselves would have found this unacceptable. An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics”, the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”. [150] All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world. This is essential, for the Church’s social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it unites “its own commitment to that made in the social field by other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, whether at the level of doctrinal reflection or at the practical level”. [151]

...

187. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.

188. “You yourselves give them something to eat!” (Mk 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.

....

201. No one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas. This is an excuse commonly heard in academic, business or professional, and even ecclesial circles. While it is quite true that the essential vocation and mission of the lay faithful is to strive that earthly realities and all human activity may be transformed by the Gospel, [171] none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice: “Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbour, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone”. [172] I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call.