Columns
Spirituality



A religious sister and a volunteer help a sister in a wheelchair get to her place in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican for a session of prayer and catechesis during the Jubilee of People with Disabilities April 29, 2025. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)



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Recently I wrote about the parable of the good Samaritan. I reflected on how there are so many situations in our country and world today where we seem to "cross the street" to avoid getting involved.

We read and hear so much that causes fear of the other; explanations about a situation that may contain some truth but are distorted for political gain; decisions that in the name of getting rid of waste, fraud and abuse are cruel, revengeful, lacking compassion, and eroding of democracy. Too often, we silently cross the street.

In the Gospel parable, finally, someone stops to help the person. It was not his job or vocation or status in life that made him stop, but simple decency, care, compassion and respect for each person. This person was willing to give of his time and his resources to help.

My reflection ended wondering who the good Samaritans are today and inviting responses. A few of you shared why and how might someone not "cross the street" but stop and offer assistance. As always, when I hear from others, their perspective widens my own and offers another way of "taking a long, loving look at the real," a phrase now often used to describe contemplation.

One reader reminded us that we judge, evaluate, compare and form opinions about a situation based on our past experiences, beliefs and cultural conditioning. It is our egoic self or constructed self that judges whether "to cross the street" in the face of injustice.

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"The Good Samaritan today would be a contemplative lover of life," the reader wrote. "S/He would cross the 'neuronic streets of synapses' in the brain and move into the silence with God in their heart. There in the silence, feelings, traumas and senses of knowing get revealed. There — over time with God's grace — we are

touched with compassion, love, divine vitality and oneness with everything. Christ becomes alive in us!"

Another reader challenged us to remember: "The individual creature is not the source of compassion or courage. Compassion and courage arise from the reservoir of Nature."

The reader wrote:

> The question then becomes how is a nature-born instinct cultivated so that it influences the whole human family? ... I become it, and by degree, it organically influences others as an evolutionary precedence. Unseen morphic fields are connecting me to my fellow humans and to the whole global community. This further suggests for me that the more of us who actualize deeper benevolence, the easier for the rest of humanity to evolve to the same condition.

A resident in a senior care facility wrote:

> Good Samaritan behavior is so dependent on the moment! Spontaneously changing directions to accommodate someone wheelchair bound, interrupting plans to transport someone to a destination to which she can no longer drive, sitting to listen to the hesitant voice of someone lonely for a bit of recognition, taking responsibility to find the medical assistance someone forgot how to do for herself — need I go on? Good Samaritans get involved with eyes that see, ears that hear and hearts that care.

But another reminded us:

> Jesus did not stay in the desert to be with his Abba. We also must leave the comfortableness of our private sacred places. Together, as caring communities, we raise the love energy to bring more peace and justice to the world. The Good Samaritan walks across the threshold of their home to meet whoever needs a smile, an encouraging word, or an act of kindness. The Good Samaritan expands their "home" by connecting with others through the internet and exploring this awesome world as global citizens. The Good Samaritan is Christ in the world today.

Grateful for these insights, I invite all of us to continue "to take a long, loving look at the real" so as to cultivate within us that nature-born instinct deepened by becoming a contemplative lover of life, seeing the oneness of everything and becoming good Samaritans with eyes that see, ears that hear and hearts that care.

Let us be Christ in the world today!