



## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

### PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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### SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2015 – THE GOOD SAMARITAN

#### **EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians [2:14-22]**

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

#### **EXPLANATION:**

Through the “**Blood of Christ**”, the Gentiles “**who were once far off**” (“without God”) have become “**near**”, united to the Church of Christ. The new humanity, the new creation that flows from sacramental

union with Christ, is offered to all, whether Jew or Gentile. Thus His Cross is said to have **destroyed the dividing middle wall** of the enmity that from time immemorial divided Jew from Gentile. Now that this wall is **broken down**, both Gentiles and Jews are reconciled and one in Christ. Man's brokenness was twofold- man was separated from man (Gentile from Jew), and man was separated from God. The healing is likewise twofold: the creation of a unified humanity, the Church, and the raising of this unified humanity to God. The Incarnation of the Son did the former; His death and Resurrection did the latter, the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, did it together. **(2:14)** Jesus has "**abolished in His flesh**" the hostility and division of Jew and Gentile by his death on the Cross. The two groups have been made into "**one new man**", a "new creation". **(2:15-16)** For the Mosaic Law which made them different has now been rendered irrelevant to salvation. Both now enjoy access to God the Father in one and the same **Spirit**; finding forgiveness through one and the same body sacrificed on the Cross. Thus they find themselves reconciled in that Body, the **enmity** between them having been killed (**put to death**) through the Cross. Christ is the **peace** between all men. **(2:17-18)** The Church, humanity unified and renewed through union with the incarnate Son of God, is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and the Apostles and prophets. **(2:19-20)** From this foundation came the Scriptures and all doctrine. By participating in the Sacraments of the Church and in the Divine Liturgy we become a Eucharistic assembly – **in one Spirit**. All of our approach to God – at all times – is accomplished in the Spirit. **(2:21-22)**

**GOSPEL** **The Reading is from St Luke** [10:25-37] **And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself."** And He said to him, "You

have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ Then Jesus answered and said: *“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?”* And he said, *“He who showed mercy on him.”* Then Jesus said to him, *“Go and do likewise.”*

**EXPLANATION:** **“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”** This is a momentous question for every person. Jesus’s answer is to love God above all else, and to love one’s neighbour. In this parable, Jesus teaches us that our **neighbour** is anyone in immediate need, even a supposed enemy. Symbolically, the **Good Samaritan** is Christ Himself. The **wounded man** is humanity set upon by demons and the **inn** is the Church. Love for neighbour proves our love for God. The action of the Samaritan is contrasted with the inattention of the priest and Levite. Their behaviour was inexcusable. They were probably among those Jews who felt that they were right in ministering only to their own kind. But Jesus makes it clear that “neighbour” had no such formal restricted meaning as “one’s own people”, in racial, ethnic or religious terms. There is no one to whom the obligation to minister out of love does not apply. The Lord defines “neighbour” not only as the human object of one’s loving care, but also as the person who out of love deals compassionately with someone in need. When the Lord

says, **“Go and do likewise”**, he is telling the lawyer to be a “neighbour” to anyone he encounters, especially anyone who needs his mercy and compassion, without regard for whom he is, without judging whether he deserves such help. If we love God with all our being, every human being becomes our neighbour. What Jesus is saying to the Jews of His day is, “If a despised Samaritan, whose very name is a curse word, whom you do not even consider a neighbour, and who has an inferior faith compared to yours, if he will not hesitate to go and rescue a Jew in trouble, how much more ought you who are God’s chosen people, you who have experienced the love of God, you who have the true religion; how much more should you be willing to translate your religion into works of love?” Jesus spoke through this parable not only to the Jews of old, but also to us today. That is, most of us are not like the Good Samaritan; most of us are like the priest and Levite. We are too busy with ourselves to respond to the needs of others. We find a thousand excuses not to get involved. We pass by on the other side. The sin of the priest and the Levite was the sin of omission. They did nothing when they could have done something. By doing nothing they left the wounded man to die. Jesus reminds us that the supreme test of religion was right there on the roadside and they failed it. The wounded are all around us. They are not just the physically wounded, but also those wounded by misery, by unemployment, by racism, by homelessness. There you have your neighbour. He may not always be lying on the side of the road. He may be walking, driving, or even running, but he is wounded nonetheless. He needs someone to be a neighbour to him and comfort him. Having told the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asked the lawyer, **“Which of these do you think was neighbour?”** And he said, **“The one who showed mercy on him.”** There you have the true neighbour. Any man. Anywhere. In need. **(10:25-37)**