

One day in second grade my sister Lisa was late for school. She doesn't remember why. But she was a very shy, sensitive child and was frightened of people staring at her. She was afraid that if she went into the classroom her teacher, Mrs. Matson, would be angry, and all her classmates would look at her. So, she just stood there in the hallway outside the classroom door afraid to go in. Frozen in place by fear, she didn't know what to do.

Just then the Principal of Sherwood Heights Elementary School, Joe Daly, happened to walk by. He noticed Lisa and asked her what the problem might be. This was awkward! How to explain a fear of going into her classroom – to the Principal?! She tried her best to explain, and as she fumbled Mr. Daly nodded. He said, "I can fix that." And he took Lisa down to the cafeteria, where he got both of them large cinnamon rolls reserved for the faculty. Together they sat and ate their cinnamon rolls. When they were done Mr. Daly took Lisa back to her classroom and went in with her, explaining to Mrs. Mattson that Lisa had been

helping him. Mrs. Matson didn't say "Boo," and classmates looked at her with envy and awe. She felt -- heavenly.

Today we heard the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is such a famous parable that we could probably all tell it from memory, so I'll keep it simple today. There are just two points I want to make. The first is -- I hope you wish you were the kind of person who could do what Mr. Daly did. I know I do. I want to be able to notice people who are hurting -- in the ditch. And then I want to be able to stop and do what needs to be done, seeing that as my top priority, rather than whatever was on my mind the second before I saw them. That's the problem, isn't it? People turn invisible or they become "problems" when we are engaged in the world, and they just can't be fit into our schedules. I'm completely guilty of this.

But often it takes so little to make such a difference. After fifty years my sister has never forgotten those 15 minutes the Principal spent with her and how he rescued her. To this day she speaks of him

using his first name – Joe Daly. Do you remember your grade school Principal's first name? I don't. But to Lisa Mr. Daly's intervention was a miracle of grace and charity.

I wonder what was on Joe Daly's mind and schedule that morning going down that hall. I wonder what he put off for 15 minutes because he saw a frightened second grader. Do you think it was more important in God's eyes than what he did do? It wasn't hard or complicated. He just noticed, stopped, reached out. We could all do that. It would change our lives if we did (and it would change other people's lives – like it did Lisa's). Deep down we already know that – it's why we all know the story by heart. And it's why Jesus told it to us.

The second point I want to make today is about our relationship with Jesus. The parable of the Good Samaritan is not just about being charitable, although that's part of it. Jesus is getting to a deeper message about Himself. There is a connection between my being the type of person who can stop and rescue even an enemy -- and who

Jesus is for me. What is faith? How do we know we have it? Why do we need it? Here's one definition of faith for me: faith In Jesus Christ is knowing in my heart that He did the same for me as Mr. Daly did for Lisa, only infinitely more so. That knowledge, in turn, can let me I feel the same way about Jesus as Lisa feels about Mr. Daly.

That might sound blasphemous. But we're all just like Lisa in that hallway. We are small, frightened, and stuck. We're afraid, and we can't solve the problem. But then this Person comes, who we can only think of as super-powerful (as a kid thinks of the Principal) and he's not angry at us because of how foolish our weaknesses are, or the mess we're in. He reaches out and rescues us. He sits down and eats with us and then makes the hopeless situation better than we ever hoped. He then leads us back into the community we were alienated from.

We human beings were all in the ditch, wounded, alienated from God by sin. Jesus is that Good Samaritan who comes and pours the wine and oil of the sacraments into our wounds made by that sin. He

binds us up and heals us. He sacrifices Himself for us, who had no right to this love, and restores us to happiness. That's who the Good Samaritan is. That's who Jesus is.

My Mother also remembered Mr. Daly. She said that when she heard from Lisa after school what had happened, she would have dropped on her knees and shined Mr. Daly's shoes, she was so grateful (for she knew her daughter and her troubles with shyness). Do we drop to our knees out of gratitude when we think of what Jesus did for us and for our loved ones, when we remember that what Jesus did for us on the Cross was so much more than Mr. Daly did? Do we feel that grateful? When we do, we will be able to imitate The Good Samaritan. That would be a beautiful prayer for today. "Lord let me know and feel how you have rescued me – so I can "go and do likewise."