

A few weeks ago, I was meeting up with a friend for chicken wings and a cold one. We hadn't seen each other in a while, and for a brief time he was going to be in town. I ended up getting to the sports bar first; and was settling in to place an order when he arrived.

"Father, a guy's been hit by a car a block up," he said.

So, I left my beer, I left the menu, and I left whatever game I was watching on the TV ... went to my truck, got my Holy Oils, and ran to help the guy.

When I got there, the paramedics were splinting his leg which was pointing the wrong way. His neck was in a stiff collar, and they had just moved him onto a wooden board and were strapping him down.

Out of breath from my short run, I asked the paramedic if I could talk to the guy. He said it was fine ... the man was alert.

So, I knelt by his side and asked: "Are you Catholic?"

"No."

Uh oh.

"Are you baptized?"

"No."

Uh oh.

"Can I pray with you?"

"Sure!" he said.

Thank God, I thought ... and we prayed together and I prayed over him.

Now, while that may sound pretty heroic, what was going through my mind was far from heroic.

I could have stayed with my cold one and watched a game at the pub.

I could have walked over there, and watched the ambulance drive away.

I could have stopped when he said, "No." the first or second time.

All of our lives are made up of decisions and the consequences of those decisions. It's not always that the choices are right or wrong — but rather what we do with them that makes our lives what they are; and makes us who we are.

In today's Gospel we hear the well-known parable of "The Good Samaritan."

We all know the story ... man is beaten and robbed ... priest walks by ... levite walks by ... Samaritan walks up and helps him.

Jesus' question at the end of the parable should strike us right between the eyes:

*“Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?”*

The parable is given by Jesus as an answer to the question posed by a scribe who initially asks:

*“Who is my neighbor?”*

We always have a chance to make a decision on how we act in any circumstance – bad or good.

The answer to Jesus' question in today's Gospel is:

*“The one who treated him with mercy.”*

Mercy is something we want to receive ... but not always something we want to give.

Think about that...

And today, as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... Let us pray for a deeper understanding of mercy ... both in the giving and in the receiving.

And in those places in our lives ... or in ourselves where we don't allow God's mercy to shine on us ... let us ask for the grace to receive His mercy.

And in those places where we aren't necessarily examples of God's mercy ... let us pray for a transformation of our hearts so that we may make choices informed by the mercy and love of God ... disciples of Jesus Christ ... configured to His Sacred Heart ... messengers of mercy ... sent in the love of God the Father, redeemed by the sacrifice of His Son, and filled with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.