



Meeting of JPIC Coordinators  
*Sisters of Christian Charity*  
Celebration  
"The new Samaritans  
of the Third Millennium"

**Biblical Icon: The good Samaritan** (Lk 10,29-37)

**Comment:** For the past years, the Gospel icon of the Good Samaritan has traced the journey of many Religious Congregations that, with a prophetic intuition, have courageously faced a new Gospel challenge of charity and solidarity by sharing the destiny of many immigrant women in search of work and of many others, wounded on our streets and enslaved by our system of life. In the last few years, thousands of women and minors have fallen in the hands of the **"brigands"** who **"have stripped them naked"** of their dignity and of their identity, leaving them **"half dead"**. Many Religious Communities, **"attentive to the signs of the times"**, have turned into **"inns"** where many women have been restored to the joy of living and of being **"women"**.

**When I needed a sister were you there**

**Ref.** And the creed and the colour,  
And the name won't matter, were you there

1. *When I needed a sister  
were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a sister were you there.*
2. I was hungry and thirsty, were you there (x2)
3. I was cold, I was naked, were you there (x2)
4. When I needed a shelter, were you there (x2)
5. When they took me to prison, were you there (x2)
6. When I needed a healer, were you there (x2)
7. When a needed a sister, were you there (x2)



**Reader:** *The lawyer wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"*

**All:** Lord, the parable of the Good Samaritan is as actual as ever in its context; grant us the wisdom of understanding who our "neighbour" is.

**Reader:** *Jesus replied, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho ..."*

- **The street**, speaks to us of a journey towards a final destination; it speaks to us of meetings and sharing, of friendship and solidarity, but reveals also situations of uneasiness, of danger and of fear;

**All:** Lord, we thank you for the encounters of the streets; help us to accompany people marginalized and to share the same risks;

**Reader:** *"...and fell into the hands of robbers, who took all he had, beat him, and then made off...."*

- **The robbers**, are the traffickers and the exploiters who, through cheating and through physical and psychological violence, enslave on the street thousands of women and minors, inexperienced, alone and vulnerable, to make of their body a source of gain; robbers are also the clients/consumers who rob the victims of their dignity, youth and femininity, to turn them into objects of pleasure;

**All:** Lord, we ask you forgiveness for those who destroy the dignity and sacrality of the life of many human beings for personal interests, using, abusing and buying even the same poverty;

**Reader:** *"... leaving him half dead".*

- **The victim**, is the woman or the unprotected minor, who along the streets of our cities undergoes sexual exploitation, experiencing the humiliation and danger of violence, of beatings, sickness, unwanted pregnancy, risks of accident and, often, death;

**All:** Lord, accept the suffering of these sisters of ours together with the fatigue of re-building their life for a better future.

**Reader:** *“Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side.*

- **The Priest and the Levite** mirror the attitude of many "well thinking" people, including Christians, who "**see and move beyond**", to avoid an uncomfortable and disturbing reality; instead they prefer silence and indifference - which is already a complicity-, or mockery and condemnation; they pretend not to see to avoid assuming responsibility in the fighting against this social uneasiness in its very root; it is suggested to reopen the "**houses of tolerance**" to eliminate the street prostitution which offends our sensitivity, but there is no pity for the injustices suffered by persons who are robbed of their fundamental human rights.

**All;** Lord, forgive the hypocrisy and the lack of courage of those who are responsible in the government and in the church, who do not intervene and do not denounce firmly the injustice which is being perpetuated against the weak and undefended persons.

**Reader:** *“... But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them”.*

- **The good Samaritan**, is a **foreigner**", who sees the "**person**", goes closer to the wretched person and stops; bends down with "**compassion**" sees the wounds, dresses them to soothe the pain; he asks no question, does not judge, does not enquire whose duty is to intervene, but takes care of him, carries him to a safe place and entrusts him to one who can take care of him till a complete healing.

**All:** Lord, we thank you for the work of the many volunteers who, day and night, bend down, with competence and compassion, on so many victims to offer them the gift of true and gratuitous love and friendship, to awaken in them trust and hope.

**Reader:** *“... Then he brought him to the inn, and looked after him. The next day he took out two denarii, and handed them to the innkeeper. Look care of him, he said and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’*

- **The inn**, offers a secure refuge to the unlucky pilgrim; our sheltering communities have become the new "**inns**" to welcome, lovingly and gratuitously, women almost destroyed by the street experience, but eager to begin a new life of recuperation and healing.

**All: Lord**, turn our communities into meeting places where women can be welcomed and loved, supported by our efforts, understood in their difficulties, helped in seeking once more the joy of living and of starting all over again, because only disinterested and gratuitous love can transform and re-create.

**Reader:** *"...Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

**Prayer:** Lord, we thank You for the gift of this Biblical icon which, though uncomfortable and demanding, opens us to new horizons and makes us to discover the richness and actuality of our charisms at the service of humanity so much in need of love, justice, solidarity and consolation. Grant us the courage of letting ourselves be evangelised by the last ones. Let us discover the joy and the beauty of our true identity as consecrated women, to set on new ways of evangelisation through **the testimony and creativity of charity**. Help us to be a genuine gift as a reflex of your compassion, mercy and predilection for those who, though considered as the rubbish of society, are the very people who "**will precede us in the kingdom of heaven**". **Amen!**

## **1. Conclusion**

May the words of the Holy Father John Paul II, pronounced on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2001, be a stimulus and a wish for all of us:

"Dearest brothers and sisters, let us go ahead with hope! A new millennium opens before the Church as a vast ocean in which to venture, relying on the help of Christ. At the very start of this century, let steps move faster, the steps of those who are called to bend on and to cure the wounded and suffering man, just like the **good Samaritan**".

## **Song: Whatsoever you**

*Whatsoever you do to the least of my sisters, that you do unto me.*

1. When I was hungry you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty you gave me to drink. Now enter into the home of my Father. **Ref.**
2. When I was homeless you opened your door. When I was naked you gave me your coat. Now enter into the home of my Father. **Ref.**
3. When in a prison you came to my cell. When I was anxious you calmed all my fears. Now enter into the home of my Father. **Ref.**