

Scripture Study

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23

(Ps 103:1-4,8,10,12-13)

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Luke 6:27-38

Overview of the Gospel:

- We continue with Jesus' Sermon on the Plain which we began in last Sunday's Gospel. We heard then that "blessed are you when men hate you" (verse 22).
- Although there is no command in the Old Testament that we are to hate our enemies (Matthew 5:43), love of neighbor was understood as being applied primarily to one's countrymen (see Leviticus 19:18, Psalm 139:19-22). Jesus, as he does elsewhere, shifts this limited perception of love outwards to even our enemies (see Luke 10:29-37. See also Romans 12:9-21 and 1 John 4:7-11).
- Jesus reminds them of the Golden Rule (verse 31. See Tobit 4:15; Sirach 31:15). Jesus himself is the supreme example of his own teachings (see Luke 23:34) and expects his disciples to obey and imitate him—as many will (see Acts 7:60).

Questions:

- In the first reading, why does David spare Saul's life, even though Saul was seeking to kill him? Since Saul was his enemy, would David have been justified in killing him when Saul was asleep and basically helpless? In light of this week's gospel reading, why or why not?
- In the second reading, the contrast is made between the "earthly" man (in the model of Adam) and the spiritual man (renewed in Jesus Christ)? Which are we supposed to imitate? How do we do that?
- Comparing the Old Testament and the New Testament, why has Jesus made a shift in the *object* of love (Leviticus 19:18)? What specifically are we to do to enemies?
- Since applying verses 29-30 literally could reinforce someone's bad behavior, what is Jesus' point (see vv 31 and 36)?
- What activities does Jesus condemn and commend (vv 37-38)? What does the promise (v. 38) mean in the context?
- Does verse 37 say that we should love others before God will love us? Why or why not? If the principle in verses 37-38 holds true, what happens to you if you fail to forgive those who offend you? Under what conditions, then, will you yourself be forgiven?
- How does this description of love challenge you? How can that be a model for relating to someone you find difficult? Have you ever shown love to an enemy? How?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 1970, 1786-89, 2842

Closing prayer

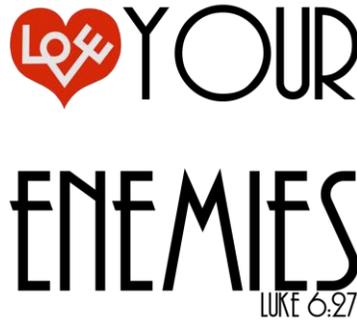
"Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing." –St. Therese of Lisieux

Remember to read and meditate this week on the daily Mass readings!

"Do good to those who hate you, pray for those who abuse you"

Gospel Reading: *Luke 6:27-38*

"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. "Judge not, and you will not be judged;



condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Meditation: What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is *grace* — treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated — with loving-kindness and mercy. God is good to the unjust as well as the just. His love embraces saint and sinner alike. God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It

is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return. Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm and ill-will? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who believe and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. His love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and griefs. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. Do you know the power of Christ's redeeming love and mercy?

"Lord, your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart free that nothing may make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make me bitter towards anyone"

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