# The Summit Online Exploring the Word

# 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

#### **GOSPEL**

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Jesus said to his disciples: 'I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.'

(Luke 6:27-38)

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic Iore

This gospel contains the most challenging of all the Christian commandments and probably the most difficult to keep: love your enemies and do good to those who hurt you.

## **EXPLORING THE WORD**

In last week's gospel, the disciples learnt that to be a faithful follower of Jesus, they must be committed to a new order. This week's text tells them how they must live in that new order; in a sense, it provides the practical details. What Jesus is suggesting should not be confused with passivity or simply inaction or resignation in the face of persecution and injustice. Quite the contrary! What Jesus is suggesting is radical action. It demands that we act towards others without being asked, that believers offer friendship and pardon constantly, without asking or hoping for anything in return. In Jesus we find God's self-revelation, God's actions in and for the world, his plan for salvation and its fulfilment. Followers of Jesus must act in these ways precisely because they are the ways of God.

 Turn the other cheek; love your enemies; do good to those who hurt you! Why should we? How can we? How challenging do you find this directive?

#### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- · What is the most challenging thing for you in this text?
- In what ways have you experienced the compassion of God?
- Respond in a practical way to one of the commands of Jesus in this gospel—for example, you could pray for those who treat you badly, show compassion to someone or forgive someone who has wronged you.
- Describe an experience of being hurt, criticised, misjudged or wronged in some way. How did you feel and how did your feelings affect your response to the situation?
- Repeat this line from the Lord's Prayer often this week and act on it:

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

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### SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God's word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

This text—along with the fifth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'—offers clear guidance to the Church in relation to acts of violence and war. And yet, shamefully, we can all point to some terrible events in history where the Church seems to have disregarded such directives.

 You could make special mention of some of the public apologies made by the Church over recent years for past wrongs—for example, that of Pope John Paul II for the Crusades and the Inquistion during the Jubilee Year in 2000, or, more recently, apologies for situations of injustice or abuse within the Church itself, or for cooperating with the removal of Indigenous children from their families.

It is important that we recognise that sometimes the Church—as a divine institution, but one that is also limited by human frailty in its actions and historical circumstances—must seek to redress any situations of injustice or hurt in order to move forward in a way more in tune with God's plan for the world.

- You could explore some of the ways the Church is attempting to redress past wrongs (for example, by promoting religious dialogue with Islam and Judaism, or by accepting responsibility for clerical abuse) and thus provide a better witness to the demands of the Gospel.
- Be sure to bring your discussion of this teaching back down to the personal level of how a Christian is to live in their daily life.

### SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

This text follows immediately on from the Beatitudes of last week's gospel. It continues the theme of the radical reversal called for by the Gospel. What the world might consider simply human nature or a natural response is not the way of Jesus' disciples, who follow a different world order. They must act and respond in a certain way because that is the way of God!

# LIVING THE WORD

Practical ideas for group leaders to employ in connecting Scripture and daily life, with suggestions for music and environment

- What activity does your community offer to promote harmony, tolerance and understanding in your local area or more broadly?
- Use the open Scriptures and a candle as a focus. Pray
  for all people who are engaged in promoting peace and
  harmony locally, nationally and globally. Pray for each
  other as you are about to enter the final stage of your
  journey. A suitable song could be 'For the healing of the
  nations' (GA 513). Conclude with the prayer of blessing in
  the RCIA at §97D.

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