

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 lore

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.

