

LOVE THY ENEMY

In today's Gospel (Lk 6:27-38), Jesus instructs us to love and pray for those people who we find challenging to love, and challenging to forgive. We are not to judge one another. We are commanded by the Lord to always be prepared to forgive. Only by replicating Divine Mercy can we get into heaven, because *the amount of mercy we measure out on each other here on earth, will be the same amount of mercy we are given back* on the Day of Judgement. That alone should motivate us to forgive at all cost. To be full of hatred is to imitate Satan. David showed mercy to Saul, who was out to kill him, out of respect for God (1Sam 26:2,7-9,11-13,22-23). We are sacred temples *modelled on the heavenly Man* (1Cor 15:45-49), the second Adam, who is Christ. Jesus instructs us to turn the other cheek and to give away our tunic, along with walking the extra mile. This means to live our lives in the spirit of humility. To give away our cloak, without expecting it back, means to give away our ability to show mercy, in return for nothing. We give mercy in a spirit of sacrifice, going that extra mile at a cost to ourselves, without repayment. To practice the martyrdom of silence will always extinguish and disarm heated and fiery arguments.

TO FORGIVE IS TO HEAL.

When we sin, we make ourselves enemies of God. Yet, in confession, He forgives us unconditionally and transforms us from enemy back to friend. We must imitate Jesus and bear with one another's weakness and faults. We must learn to be tolerant, understanding and patient, especially with those who offend us. Jesus cried out from the Cross; *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do* (Lk. 23:34). Let us see each other through the eyes of the compassionate Jesus. The devil's followers are marked by fighting, arguing, insulting behaviour, disrespectful language, fornication, addictions and creating divisions in families and communities. Jesus says that *the sun rises to shine on good and bad people and that rain falls on the honest and dishonest alike*. This means that divine grace from heaven falls on everybody, regardless of our sinful state. However, those who make enemies of each other have rejected this heavenly grace. Jesus says, *to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us; in this way we will be true children of our Father in heaven*. God is asking us to allow Him to fashion our souls and hearts with the divine grace falling from heaven. Our Lady is the Vessel of God's Grace and we should ask her to help us rid ourselves of the sins of pride, anger, impurity, bitterness and resentment, and to live in the full grace of love, charity, holiness, purity and forgiveness.

SINFUL HEART PREVENTS SHOWING MERCY

Our inability and refusal to forgive those who trespass against us, comes from our false and exaggerated sense of self-importance. If I think my life belongs to me, then I will cling to resentment, anger, and self-righteousness, when I feel that my dignity and self-importance (pride) has been compromised or threatened. However, when I realise that my life is not about me, but more about my Creator, only then, will I forgive others in relation to God's forgiveness of me. Only then will I find that real forgiveness is possible. The Lord is compassion and love (Ps 102), so must we be the same. St Paul wrote that, *We are not our own; we were bought with a great price. So we are called to glorify and bear God in our body* (1Cor 6:20). As responsible adults we have to come to our senses (Lk 15:17) and get real if we intend to be found worthy to enter heaven someday. When we call God, *Our Father* (Lk 11:2), we are called to act like his true spiritual and forgiving children. If we are pleased to call him *Father*, then let Him, in turn, be pleased to call us His children, and act accordingly, by not insulting His teachings or each other. God bless, Fr. Brendan.