

Saturday 1st of Lent

Gospel text (Mt 5,43-48): Jesus said to his disciples, «You have heard that it was said: ‘Love your neighbor and do not do good to your enemy’. But this I tell you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. For he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good, and he gives rain to both the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what is special about that? Do not even tax collectors do as much? And if you are friendly only with your friends, what is so exceptional about that? Do not even the pagans do as much? For your part you shall be righteous and perfect in the way your heavenly Father is righteous and perfect».

«Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you»

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Today's Gospel exhorts us to the most perfect love. Love is wanting to do good to others, and here lies our personal fulfillment. We do not love for our own sake, but for the sake of doing good to our neighbor, and on doing it to improve as persons. The II Vatican Council said, «human beings cannot reach their prime but by sincerely giving themselves to others». Sainte Therese of the Infant Jesus said, ‘This is making an holocaust of our life’. Love is a human vocation. Our whole behavior, to be truly human, has to be the expression of the reality of our being while fulfilling our vocation for love. As saint John Paul II has written, «a man, cannot live without love. He becomes incomprehensible. His life does not make sense if love is not revealed to him, if he does not find love, if he does not experience love and makes it his, if he does not intensely participate in it».

Love has its foundation and reaches its highest form in God's love in Christ. We are invited to a dialogue with God. We exist for the love of God, Who created us, and for the love of God which keeps us, «and we can only say we live in full realization of the truth when we freely recognize this love and fully trust our Creator» (II

Vatican Council): this is the most important reason of its dignity. In other words, human love must remain under the custody of Divine Love, which is where it comes from, where it finds its reflection and brings it to its fullest. This is why, love, when truly human, loves with God's heart and can even embrace its foe. Otherwise, one does not truly love. To such an extent that the exigency of our giving ourselves sincerely, becomes a divine precept: «For your part you shall be righteous and perfect in the way your heavenly Father is righteous and perfect» (Mt 5:48).