

Thursday of the Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 6,27-38): Jesus said to his disciples, «But I say to you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you and pray for those who treat you badly. To the one who strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek; from the one who takes your coat, do not keep back your shirt. Give to the one who asks and if anyone has taken something from you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have others do to you. If you love only those who love you, what kind of graciousness is yours? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do favors to those who are good to you, what kind of graciousness is yours? Even sinners do the same. If you lend only when you expect to receive, what kind of graciousness is yours? For sinners also lend to sinners, expecting to receive something in return. But love your enemies and do good to them, and lend when there is nothing to expect in return. Then will your reward be great and you will be sons and daughters of the Most High. For He is kind towards the ungrateful and the wicked.

»Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Don't be a judge of others and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you, and you will receive in your sack good measure, pressed down, full and running over. For the measure you give will be the measure you receive back».

«Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful»

Fr. Jaume AYMAR i Ragolta

Today, the Gospel of the Lord is asking us twice to love our enemies. And, immediately afterwards, it gives three positive instances of this commandment: do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who offend you. It is a commandment that looks difficult to abide by: how can we love those who do not love us? What is more, how can we love those we know for sure hate us? To love like that is a gift from God, but we must be open to it. After all, loving our enemies seems to be the wisest thing to do from a human point of view: our enemy will feel unarmed; and to love him may be the definite condition for him to refrain from being our enemy any more. In line with the above, Jesus goes on saying: «To the one who strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek» (Lk 6:29). This could be interpreted as an excessive mansuetude. But, what did Jesus do when He was struck in the face in his Passion? He certainly did not strike back, but with so great a firmness, full of charity, that must have surprised that irate servant, He replied: «If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?» (Jn 18:22-23).

All religions have a golden maxim: «Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you». Jesus, however, is the only one to formulate it positively: «Do to others as you would have others do to you» (Lk 6:31). This golden rule is the basis for all morals. Commenting on this little verse, St. John Chrysostom says: «There is even more, for Jesus did not only say: ‘wish good to others’, but ‘do good to others’»; this is why, the golden maxim proposed by Jesus cannot just remain as wishful thinking, but it must be translated into deeds.