Saturday of the First Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Mt* 5:43-48): Jesus said to his disciples, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good… So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Charity. Loving our enemies

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today's Jesus opposes the provisions of the "Torah" a new radicalism of justice before God: not only are we not to kill, but we must offer reconciliation to our un-reconciled brother; not only are we to be even-handed in justice (“eye for eye, tooth for tooth"), but we must let ourselves be struck without striking back; we are to love not simply our neighbor but also our enemy… It is by "loving to an extreme" that Christ will consummate on the Cross by praying for His "enemies".

But is this actually realistic? God does not demand of us a feeling which we ourselves are incapable of producing. God has loved us first and He makes us experience His love, and from this "before" God, love can also blossom as a response within us. With God I love even the person I do not like or even know.

—In the intimate encounter with God, I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ, the same as the heavenly Father.