

Thursday of the Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 6:27-38): Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

“Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful”

Fr. Jaume AYMAR i Ragolta
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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 person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well” (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 have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” (Jn 18:23).

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 them 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.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“My God, how good you are! How well do you suit the trial to our strength!” (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux)

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“When one learns to blame himself he is merciful with others.” (Francis)

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“The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the ‘new commandment’ of Jesus (Jn 13:34), to love one another as he has loved us (cf. Jn 15:12).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 1970)