

My dear people of God, the word that runs through the readings is **love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...** (Lk.6:27). Jesus does not limit himself to advising his disciples to love their enemies but also firmly commands them, and all Christians to love our enemies and do good to them. This teaching is not based on the Law of Moses or any other law; Jesus gives it on his own authority: **"I say this to you: love your enemies"** (Lk.6:27). Jesus' command of love embraces every one; we can exclude no one from our love, not even our enemies. At the heart of the teachings of Jesus that we hear today are two teachings that are so important in our lives: **forgiveness and acceptance of mistreatment**. We see these teachings today in the story of David's relationship with King Saul. We also see this in the First Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul tells us that we bear the image of the first man and we can bear the image of Jesus Christ.

In today's first reading, we see a very beautiful feature of David's fear of the Lord. David had a golden chance to do away with Saul. When in the company of one of his commandants, David sneaked into Saul's camp while the king and his soldiers were soundly asleep. He spares his enemy whom he could have easily killed him with impunity. The only reason why David spared King Saul's life is that he is the **Lord's anointed**: "... who can lay a hand on the **Lord's anointed and remain innocent?**" (1 Sam.26:9). David's magnanimity towards Saul is to be admired all the more since in those days' revenge was considered sacred, and to spare one's own enemy was considered both foolish and dangerous.

Jesus in the Gospel is giving us concrete examples that will make us holy. The customary principle of self-defense is rejected by this saying of Jesus. The goal is to shame the opponent into a change of heart. Hence, Jesus' recommendation is do to others as you would like them do to you (Lk.6:31). Jesus is teaching us forbearance, generosity ... and love of one's enemies that assures the integrity of Christian morality and distinguishes Christians from others. Again, our Lord tells us to adopt a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, a new way that is radically opposed to the way of the world. He tells us to love our enemies and to be pleasant with those who attack us. He tells us to live in peace with all, even those who hate us. Others may or may not change their ways, but we cannot allow their actions to change us. We cannot allow others to steal the joy we have in being united to Jesus Christ. We need to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. Therefore, the New Law of the Kingdom of God is the Law of love.

My question is why are we Christians are called to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, to pray for those who mistreat us, to offer the other cheek and to give your other cloak, to lend money and to expect nothing back, not to judge, to be compassionate and to forgive? This is too much! The fact is that in the justice of God: violence will be answered by peace, hatred should be defeated by love, injury should be healed by forgiveness and evil should be controlled by goodness. This is very simple. It is because we are children of God, the Most High who is Himself good to the ungrateful and the wicked. Also, a true disciple will be like his Father: he loves His enemies, does good to those who hate Him and kind to those who do not appreciate what He has done for them. Lastly, we are created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, let us do our best to love like our heavenly Father.

In conclusion, dear friends, let us fill our mind with those things that are good, and praise worthy, things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and honorable, so that God who gives us peace will be with us (Phil. 4:8-9). Let us pray, today, that our hearts might truly be open to forgiveness and to love one another. Let us learn to do good to all our enemies. Let us bless them and pray for them. Mother Theresa once said, **do not treat people as bad as they are but treat them as good as you are!** Let us do our best to be merciful, just as our Father is merciful; so that when our life on earth is over we will find rest for our soul. Amen!