



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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...give, and it will be given to you.

*A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over,
will be put into your lap; for the measure you give
will be the measure you get back." (Luke 6:38)*

This reading continues the Sermon on the Plain in Luke, insisting on the reliance of the transformative power of grace flowing from the Sacred Heart of Jesus in our Christian lives. The key line is the most difficult: "Love your enemies." The point of this whole passage, and the point to reflect on today, is to be inspired through the Holy Spirit toward an ideal of love. This glorious illumination stands as a call and invitation for us to enter into the Sacred Heart of Jesus more fully and to outpour the grace of this love to others.

This is the motivation that underlies the teaching. We are to love as God loves, to be merciful as the heavenly Father is merciful. Matthew uses the word "perfect" rather than "merciful," but Luke's version is probably closer to the original. Perfection was seen in antiquity as impossible for humans to achieve, whereas mercy was an attribute of God. What Jesus urges us to do in this passage is to incarnate God's mercy.

The examples given of what love of enemies demands are nearly impossible on our own power, "*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*" (Matt 19:26) We should reflect on this challenge to rise above our limitations that tempt our willingness to love in those seemingly impossible situations. This reading is an invocation to live a life as a generative disciple, engaging in the spirituality of abundance.

The last part of today's reading insists on cooperative sanctifying grace, giving us the blessed assurance that as we do, God will do. This is not uncommon when Jesus speaks of forgiveness. Certainly forgiveness comes first from God through Christ, yet only if we yearn to be able to forgive others can we embrace God's forgiveness.

The final image of the measure of grain, shaken down, packed tightly and overflowing being poured into one's lap is for me an image of the kitchen apron. The unconditionally loved children returning from the field of harvest as they run to fill mom's apron opened before them with the abundance of plenty. This is a wonderful symbol of the overwhelming generosity of God, which we are called to incarnate.

Reflect on this passage with a growing desire to empty yourself of your desires, and to be filled with the passion and mercy of Christ. Reflect on the movement of the heart to live the life of the Christian ideal, firmly and without hesitation. Give your day to the Lord, and strive to love richly as you have been loved.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Jesus addressed a great crowd of his disciples, together with the multitude from Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon.

*"I say to you that listen:
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
pray for those who abuse you."*

*"If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;
and from anyone who takes away your coat
do not withhold even your shirt."*

*"Give to everyone who begs from you;
and if anyone takes away your goods,
do not ask for them again."*

*"Do to others as you would have them do to you.
If you love those who love you,
what credit is that to you?
For even sinners love those who love them.
If you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you?
For even sinners do the same.*

*"If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.
But love your enemies,
do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.
Your reward will be great, and you will be
children of the Most High;
for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."*

*"Do not judge, 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.
A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over,
will be put into your lap;
for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."*

The Gospel of the Lord.

