

SCC REFLECTION: 7th Sunday Year C. Lk. Fr Donal McIlraith

The Sermon on the Plain



Text: Luke 6:27-38

[27] "But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

[28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

[29] To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

[30] Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.

[31] And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

[32] "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

[33] And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

[34] And 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.

[35] But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

[36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

[37] "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

[38] give, and it will be given to you; 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."

Reflection.

1. This is obviously a part of Jesus' teaching, indeed, his commands, that we need to come back to again and again. In the first part (vv27-31) the disciples are being ordered to love those who hate and persecute them, to give freely and to keep the golden rule. In the second half (vv 32-38) Jesus tells the disciples that this love will get them a reward in heaven. They must be merciful as God is merciful, avoid judgment and give freely so that God will give them freely.
2. Acting nicely to those who hate us is never going to be easy, but this is what Jesus did in his passion. Luke tells us he kept repeating, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do (Lk 23:34). St Thomas Aquinas reminds us that Jesus did not turn the other cheek when he was slapped during his passion (JN 18:22). The issue is not physically turning the cheek but having the good of those who hurt us in our hearts. We must still love them.
3. Give to everyone who begs from you. Kerekere is a blessing and a curse. Wisdom is needed to know how to be generous in difficult situations. The Golden Rule is "as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." The Old Testament version of that is found in Lev 18:18, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Tobit 4:15 (the Silver Rule: "What you hate, do not do to anyone") has a negative version of this. Jesus is telling us that no matter how people treat us, we must treat them positively, with love.
4. God is our creator and wishes everyone to be saved. He is full of mercy for us all. We are called to imitate, to reproduce, God's mercy in our lives. St Faustina had passed the message of Divine Mercy clearly to this generation. Judgment belongs to God. (This does not mean we cannot make an accurate assessment of someone). God will give to us, as we have given to others!

Next week: Lk 6:39-45:

[39] He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?

[40] A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.

[41] Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

[42] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

[43] "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; [44] for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

[45] The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.