

Love Your Enemies

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Conflict has always been part of human history. In Jesus' time, tensions ran high between the Jewish people and their Roman oppressors, a dynamic of domination and resentment that bred hostility. In our modern lives, we see echoes of this strife in political disagreements, societal divisions, and personal disputes. Families are torn apart by grievances, friendships are lost to misunderstandings, and even the simplest rivalries, such as those between sports teams, can escalate into animosity. The reality of division feels inescapable, and yet, in Luke 6:27-38, Jesus offers a radical and unsettling command: "Love your enemies."

This is not mere tolerance, nor is it a theoretical exercise. Jesus calls us to love actively, with *agape* love—the self-sacrificial love that seeks the good of others even when it comes at great personal cost. Loving your enemies means looking past your anger, your hurt, and your pride. Think of someone you truly dislike—someone whose actions or words have deeply wounded you. To love them as Jesus commands is not to excuse their behavior but to seek their good despite it. As writer-philosopher Peter Kreeft reminds us, "The measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." In loving others—especially those who challenge us most—we reflect the love God pours out on us.

Jesus's teaching embodies the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." It challenges us to go beyond natural inclinations. What credit is it, Jesus asks, to love only those who love you? Anyone can do that. True Christian love demands more—it requires us to rise above the instinct to retaliate or harbor resentment. The words of Indian politician and social activist Mahatma Gandhi resonate here: "An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind." Without forgiveness and love, the cycle of harm continues endlessly.

Loving our enemies does not mean allowing injustice to persist unchecked, nor does it mean ignoring evil. Rather, it means breaking the cycle of hatred by responding to hostility with grace. Often, kindness can disarm even the fiercest opposition. By your good intentions and actions, you may diffuse a situation, soften a hardened heart, or grow seeds of peace.

This is not easy. In fact, it goes against our very nature as human beings. But with God's help, it is possible. Christ himself is the ultimate example, offering his life for all, even as he forgave those who crucified him. Loving our enemies is not optional for Christians: it is central to the Gospel message. So, when you find this call difficult, ask for God's strength. Trust that through God's grace, you can live out this radical love. By doing so, you not only follow Christ's command but also allow his light to shine through you in a broken and divided world.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy