

Weekly Gospel Readings

The 4th Sunday of Paone

Love Your Enemies

On this Sunday (07/02/23), the fourth Sunday of Paone, the Church reads from [Luke 6:27-38](#). This reading coincides with the sixth *antithesis from the Sermon on the Mount. Additionally, the vesper's reading for this Sunday also begins with the sixth antithesis, but it is taken from the [Matthew 5:34-48](#). Jesus is not contradicting the old law but fulfilling and interpreting it. For example, He says, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’* **But** *I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*” ([Mt 5:43-44](#)), which is where this passage begins. There are many things to take away from this passage, but we will focus on two main ideas: loving your enemy and freely giving.

The first verse that we should pay close attention to is the very first verse as it sums up the whole message Jesus conveys in the sermon – “*But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.*” ([Lk 6:27-28](#)) We see David enact these exact words of our Lord when he spares Saul in the cave, and what a significant effect it had on Saul, who was pursuing David’s life with all his might and resources. We should always follow David’s example, who, when presented with the opportunity to humiliate and kill Saul, humbled himself before him and became a cause of repentance for Saul. How often do we seek to kill others, not necessarily physically but emotionally and mentally, through our words and actions instead of humbling ourselves before them with genuine humility and causing them to turn away from their anger or sin? David indeed offered his other cheek when he prostrated himself before Saul as Jesus instructs us to do, and as a result, we see Saul’s repentance when he says to David, “*Is this your voice, my son David?’ And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, ‘You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil.’*” ([1 Samuel 24:16-17](#)). Undoubtedly, the best way to approach others is with love, no matter the situation, and that is what is required of us as Christians.

The other main focus of this passage is giving freely. When we encounter people experiencing homelessness or people in need, our first instinct is to judge them and find out if they will use the money we give them for evil or sin. However, this is not what God instructs us to do here. Jesus tells us to “*Give to everyone who begs from you*” ([Lk 6:30](#)) and to “*expecting nothing in return*” ([Lk 6:35](#)). Moreover, if we are so concerned about what they should do with what we offer, we should pray for them instead of judge them! St John Chrysostom gives us a sobering message when he says, “*...if God should examine minutely each of our issues as we investigate the poor, we would not bring to pass for ourselves one single pardon or mercy*”.

May we humble ourselves before our enemies and freely give to those in need.

* (*An antithesis is an oppositional statement Jesus makes against the Mosaic Law.*)

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version (ESV)
- Chrysostom, John. “Homily 10.” *On Repentance and Almsgiving*, translated by George Christo, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1998, p. 148.