

February 23, 2025



Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

CALLED TO UNITY

By Julie Mussché

Today's Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples:

*"To you who hear I say,
love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
To the person who strikes you on one cheek,
offer the other one as well,
and from the person who takes your cloak,
do not withhold even your tunic.
Give to everyone who asks of you,
and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.
For if you love those who love you,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners love those who love them.
And if you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you?"*

*Even sinners do the same.
If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment,
what credit is that to you?
Even sinners lend to sinners,
and get back the same amount.
But rather, love your enemies and do good to them,
and lend expecting nothing back;
then your reward will be great
and you will be children of the Most High,
for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
“Stop judging and you will not be judged.
Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.
Forgive and you will be forgiven.
Give, and gifts will be given to you;
a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing,
will be poured into your lap.
For the measure with which you measure
will in return be measured out to you.”*

LUKE 6:27-38

Reflection

How does one unpack this passage when it is so filled with instruction and foundation? Two lines strike me as summary punctuations: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,” and “For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” Is anyone challenged during this pivotal time to live into these ideals? I know I certainly am. At the same time, I also feel called to be a unifying presence in situations of conflict.

Several years back, I served as an internal mediator for a large organization. The majority of dispute resolutions focused on employee performance evaluations with occasional group or team interventions. The practice of mediation recognizes that ultimately, disputants hold responsibility for working through to resolution, and that this requires intentional listening and the ability to appreciate and understand another’s perspective.

There is something sacred about being witness to conflict resolution. In a number of sessions, I observed a sudden shift in understanding between participants that was nothing short of miraculous. Of course, not every mediation results in reconciliation. Based on observation, when people are enslaved by their anger, or bound by the need to be right or vindicated, it is

almost impossible to find a place to mend a relationship.

What does it mean to live out the call to unity and reconciliation? To love those that hate us? To forgive others as God forgives us? To be a force of love with everyone we encounter regardless of whether we think the same? In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, St. Paul reminds us, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (*New International Version*)

Amen to that.



Person Holding Heart Shaped Cut Out

Photo by Engin Akyurt

For Pondering

- What are you invited to reflect on and consider during these divisive times?
 - How can God companion you as you strive to grow as an agent of God's love in the world?
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For Prayer

*Blessed Mender of Souls,
thank you for the graces of reconciliation.
Help me to examine my “self” with courage and truth
and to be open to your urgings.
Shine a light on my broken places
and help me to pick up and reconstruct the pieces
so that I may be better able to offer your love to all I encounter.
Amen.*

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