

February 19, 2023



LOVE THAT STRETCHES THE SOUL

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

*"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,
that you may be children of your heavenly Father,
for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good,
and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust."*

MATTHEW 5:43-45

"You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart."

LEVITICUS 19:2

"The Lord is kind and merciful."

*“Do you not know that you are the temple of God,
and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

Reflection

The readings today are quite challenging. They focus on loving one's enemies and not allowing hatred to dwell in one's heart. Not an easy spiritual discipline! Yet, both the Hebrew Testament and the Christian Testament reveal this Godly attitude of the heart. “Why?”, I ask. The response that readily comes to mind is that God is LOVE! This is the essence of God: unconditional, self-emptying Love! Naturally, the corollary that follows is tangibly revealed in compassions, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, patience, and many other virtues.

Not only is God LOVE, but God also desires an intimate relationship with all of creation, including the person I don't really like or appreciate. God's desire stirs within each one of us precisely because we are “temples of God and . . . the Spirit of God dwells in [us]” (1 Cor 3:16). Yet, God leaves us free to choose to open ourselves to God's ways. The more aware we are of God, the more God's abiding presence stirs us to consciously choose love over hatred.

When I am living in the peaceful flow of life and relationships, this command is inviting and possible. I sense the subtle, yet powerful, presence of God dwelling within my soul. I enter fully into the psalm response today, “The Lord is kind and merciful” (Ps 103:8). I pray for the good of all people despite perceived bad behavior. Love, compassion, and mercy are readily available.

I am the first to claim that I have no enemies, at least no threatening ones. I don't know about you, dear readers, yet I sometimes find loving or wishing well for someone who hurts me more difficult. And one whom I may determine as being offensive due to behavior, politics, stringent religious principles, and narrow mindedness seems far removed from me, thus worthy of the title “enemy.”

When confronting the conflicted emotions and harsh realities in daily life, this loving is much more challenging and disturbing. Still, there are ample examples in scripture and in society of people loving one's neighbor, forgiving the one who hurt us, or embracing the perceived enemy. Jesus forgave those who persecuted and crucified him. Others throughout history have done so as well---the Amish community whose children were gunned down, for example.

My own misgivings and perceived reality seem so insignificant. Their examples compel me to wrestle with my own emotions and ego determination. I

The blessing of God's abiding presence within makes such forgiveness possible by the love of God within my heart. I am always urged to choose love as my response. Rooted in the great love of God, I lean on the heart of God and pray to forgive, to be compassionate, and to desire only good for another, including the one seen as "enemy."



- Who are those that I see as “other” or “enemy”?
- What is my inner sense of God who dwells within me, loving me into life?

For Prayer

I lean on the heart of God and pray for the grace, the help needed to be more loving and compassionate toward others and toward myself:

Gracious and loving God, I come to you in need of healing and compassion. Teach me your ways of love so I might reverently care for others and myself as you do with all permeating and healing love. Make my heart and soul more like yourself. Amen

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

Support Us Here



Visit Website

(714) 744-3172

Join Mailing List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

[Unsubscribe knuernberg@csjorange.org](mailto:knuernberg@csjorange.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by thecsd@csjorange.org