

## SHOW WHAT KIND OF GOD YOU BELIEVE IN!

(LUKE 6:27-38)

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus continues to instruct his disciples and the wider group. He tells them (and ourselves) to “love your enemies”.

This verb is not an emotional term, but has the sense of wishing the best for the other person in a disinterested way, without any thought of personal advantage. This is the reverse of the perhaps usual reaction of wishing some form of revenge on someone who does not like us or has tried to do us harm. The love that Luke presents Jesus speaking about is more a matter of attitude, not emotional involvement.

We find in this extract Luke’s version of the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you would like them to treat you.” The wider reading suggests that we should act as God does. As children often resemble their parents, disciples of Jesus should aim at being “[children] of the Most High”, so that other people may see in them and their attitude and treatment of others the kind of God in whom they say they believe.

This God, Jesus says, is “compassionate” or “merciful” and acts positively towards people who are apparently undeserving. If those listening to Jesus put into practice his teachings, God will reward them to an overflowing degree: God will not weigh out the amount to be given, unlike a careful merchant. But God will take our own measuring into account. ■

### REFLECT

In Luke’s account of Jesus’ teaching, we are told to be “compassionate” or “merciful” rather than “perfect” as in Matthew’s account. The theme of compassion or mercy runs through Luke’s version of the Jesus story, which is perhaps one of the reasons why so many people describe it as their favourite Gospel.

But this section is very demanding: Jesus requires that we go beyond our normal, human reactions and look at others in a different light. Wishing the best for someone we instinctively don’t like, or who has done us harm, is a tall order: it will be demonstrated later in the Gospel narrative, when Jesus prays for forgiveness for those who are crucifying him.

We often hear talk about evangelisation. This can be understood as presenting the Christian faith to an audience of people who do not believe in terms of preaching, media programmes and other forms of publicity. As we see from Luke’s Acts of the Apostles, this can be very effective. However, our Gospel passage today may be suggesting that there is another form of spreading the word: it might be summed up as attraction rather than promotion. The faith is illustrated or manifested by the type of people who believers actually are. It is this which can arouse interest in other people, who decide “those Christians have something special and I want some of it!” If other people see in us some likeness of the God we believe in, they may well start to wonder and inquire what we have: but first, we must be “children of the Most High”. ■

### SAY

**Treat others as you would like them to treat you.**

(Luke 6:31)

### LEARN

The Greek New Testament word for “love” in today’s reading is not an emotional term.

It means to desire the best for the other, without hoping for any advantage for the person doing the wishing.

Compassion or mercy are terms frequently occurring in the Gospel according to Luke.



### DO

Look at yourself in the mirror: see yourself as a son or daughter of the Most High. Don’t be afraid, but resolve again to live up to your calling.



**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.  
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful  
with me.

**GLORIA**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that, always pondering spiritual things,  
we may carry out in both word and deed  
that which is pleasing to you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

Saul set off and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, accompanied by three thousand men chosen from Israel to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph.

So in the dark David and Abishai made their way towards the force, where they found Saul asleep inside the camp, his spear stuck in the ground beside his head, with Abner and the troops lying round him.

Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has put your enemy in your power; so now let me pin him to the ground with his own spear. Just one stroke! I will not need to strike him twice." David answered Abishai, "Do not kill him, for who can lift his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt?" David took the spear and the pitcher of water from beside Saul's head, and they made off. No one saw, no one knew, no one woke up; they were all asleep, for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

David crossed to the other side and halted on the top of the mountain a long way off; there was a wide space between them. David then called out, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the soldiers come across and take it. The Lord repays everyone for his uprightness and loyalty. Today the Lord put you in my power, but I would not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 102

Response:

**The Lord is compassion and love.**

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord,  
all my being, bless his holy name.  
My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings. (R.)
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and  
compassion. (R.)
3. The Lord is compassion and love,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.  
He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults. (R.)
4. As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins.  
As a father has compassion on his sons,  
the Lord has pity on those who fear him. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

The first man, Adam, as scripture says,  
became a living soul; but the last Adam has  
become a life-giving spirit. That is, first the  
one with the soul, not the spirit, and after  
that, the one with the spirit. The first man,  
being from the earth, is earthly by nature;  
the second man is from heaven. As this earthly  
man was, so are we on earth; and as the  
heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. And  
we, who have been modelled on the earthly  
man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Open our heart, O Lord,  
to accept the words of your Son.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Luke 6:27-38

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: "I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

"Be compassionate as your Father is  
compassionate. Do not judge, and you will

not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
*(all bow during the next three lines)*  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord,  
with the observance that is your due,  
we humbly ask you,  
that what we offer to the honour of your  
majesty  
may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

I will recount all your wonders,  
I will rejoice in you and be glad,  
and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that we may experience the effects of the  
salvation  
which is pledged to us by these mysteries.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.