



Liturgy Cycle A

Seventh Sunday Of The Year

Love Your Enemies

Introduction

In today's Gospel Christ says to us: 'Love your enemies.' We tend to take these words with a grain of salt, as if they were meant for the saints, not for us. But they are meant for us. We all have some enemies. Let us think about how we treat them.

First Reading (Leviticus 19:1-2. 17-18)

Moses is ordered by God to tell the people they must be holy. What does this imply? It means they are not to hate anyone or bear a grudge against anyone.

Second Reading (1Cor3:16-23)

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit dwells among them. They are the temple of God and, therefore, should be holy.

Gospel (Matthew 5:38-48)

This contains one of the most revolutionary things ever said. All revolutionaries have said that enemies must be destroyed. But Christ said: You must not destroy your enemies, you must love them.

Prayer of the faithful

Let us pray that God may help us to cleanse our hearts of the poison of hatred, bitterness and resentment, a poison which robs us of our peace and destroys our capacity to love.

R: Lord, graciously hear us.

That Christians may strive, in spirit of love and understanding, to overcome the things that divide them. Lord, hear us.

R: Lord, graciously hear us.

For all government leaders: that they may take the path of peace and reconciliation rather than the path of war and retaliation. Lord, hear us.

R: Lord, graciously hear us.



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For all the people we do not like; for those we reject, and with whom we will have nothing to do. Lord, hear us.

R: Lord, graciously hear us.

That we may be able to banish from our hearts all hatred and resentment so that we may become people who can love others, even our enemies. Lord, hear us.

R: Lord, graciously hear us.

Communion Reflection

When Abraham Lincoln was running for president he had an arch-enemy called Stanton. Stanton never lost a chance to attack him. Yet when Lincoln won the election he surprised his friends by giving Stanton a post in his cabinet. He defended his action by saying: 'He is the best man for the job'.

And he was proved right. Stanton gave him loyal service. When Lincoln was assassinated Stanton paid him his tribute. He said: 'Lincoln was one of the greatest men who ever lived'.

Once when someone asked Lincoln why didn't he destroy his enemies, he said: 'Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?'