

## Proper 3

*Sunday between 18 and 24 February inclusive, if earlier than the Second Sunday before Lent, or Sunday between 24 and 28 May inclusive, if after Trinity Sunday ·*

The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Principal Service readings

Genesis 45.3-11, 15                      Joseph discloses who he is to his brothers

Psalm 37.1-7, [8-11, 40-41]          Commit your way to the Lord

1 Corinthians 15.35-38, 42-50        What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable

Luke 6.27-38                              Love your enemies; do not judge

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *Right living*

<sup>27</sup>I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup>If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup>If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup>Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

Luke 6.27-38 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

## Comments and Questions

Following on from last week's reading (6.17-26), Jesus continues his 'Sermon on the Plain', exploring what the new way he expounds means in practice. Luke seeks to provide a blueprint for living in the realm of God.

Two points come across strongly from today's reading: Christians are to love their enemies, and they are to be generous in their response to others. Jesus articulates the need to go beyond what is expected. Even sinners love those who love them in return. More challenging is to love others when the love is not returned. Jesus promotes a gospel that offers the same gratuitous love that God offers to humanity. This love is not just an interior disposition; it must express itself in behaviour. Love must be demonstrated by action.

Jesus exhorts the people against the urge to retaliate (6.29). Rather than cursing them or condemning them, a positive thing to do is to pray for them.

God's love is offered to the just and the unjust. God's love for humanity is not dependent on humanity's response. We are to love similarly to this. The reward for going beyond expectations and loving as God loves us is the reality of being children of the Most High.

## Quotations

### 1

Those who are difficult to love, are difficult to love because they have gone through difficult things which have made them the way they are. What you need to do is to forgive, what they need is your love.

Jeanette Coron, 1987–

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

### 2

There may come a time when it will be possible for you to humiliate your worst enemy or even to defeat him, but in order to love the enemy you must not do it... The Greek language has another word [for love]. It calls it agape. Agape is more than romantic love. Agape is more than friendship. Agape is understanding, redemptive goodwill for all men. Agape is an overflowing love, a spontaneous love, which seeks nothing in return. And theologians would say that it is the love of God operating in the human heart. When you rise to love on this level you love all men, not because you like them, not because their ways appeal to you, not because they are worthwhile to you, but you love all men because God loves them. And you rise to the noble heights of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. And I think this is what Jesus means when he says, "Love your enemies."

Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929–1968

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Morality; justice; moral decision making; reconciliation; penance

## Closing Prayer

Compassionate God and Father,  
you are kind to the ungrateful,  
merciful even to the wicked.

Pour out your love upon us,  
that with good and generous hearts  
we may keep from judging others  
and learn your way of compassion.

We make our prayer 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.

*Opening prayers · Ordinary Time 7, Year C<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.*