

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.



“love your
enemies...”

Gospel: Matthew 5:38-48

³⁸Jesus said to his disciples: “You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. ³⁹But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; ⁴⁰if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. ⁴²Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away. ⁴³You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neigh-

You are invited to read the
Gospel passage attentively,
respectfully and reverently
as a gift of God.



bour and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; ⁴⁵in this way you will be sons and daughters of your Father in heaven, for he causes the sun to rise on bad people as well as good, and the rain to fall on honest and dishonest people alike. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what right have you to

The Lenten series of Lectio Divina for Newcomers

Presented by Fr Joseph Ralph OP begins (In Person) **Mon 20th Feb at 7pm Or (Online) Thur 23rd Feb at 8pm** and continues for six weeks. For further information and to book a place, please contact the Lectio Centre, Newry with preferred option. (Numbers are limited)

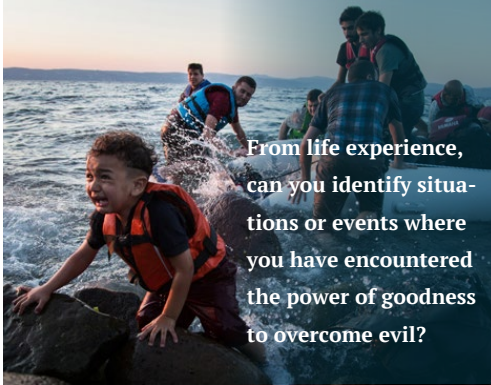
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Further resources:
lectio.newrydominican.com

claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? ⁴⁷ And if you save your greetings for your brothers and sisters, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? ⁴⁸ You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”



From life experience, can you identify situations or events where you have encountered the power of goodness to overcome evil?

Reading

The demands of this Gospel can seem overwhelming and beyond us. Some would go so far as to say that Jesus is being unrealistic. He invites us to aspire to the “perfection” of God: not to treat our enemy according to sins or faults but, rather, with compassion and love; not to harbour hatred and a desire for revenge but to treat the enemy with mercy and kindness; not to fight evil with evil but with goodness and light. Jesus challenges his disciples to love as God loves: not discriminating between those who treat them well and those who treat them badly.

He further expands this teaching to embrace all people regardless of race, religion or ethnicity; in God’s eyes, we are all his children.

v39-40. “You have learnt how it was said...but I say this to you...let him have your cloak as well...go two miles with him”

Can you identify the “Jesus person” of the Gospel in yourself or others: someone who accepts people as they are but, at the same time, is not afraid to challenge them to grow and to realise their full potential?

v38. “eye for an eye.”

Can you remember suffering an injustice that left you consumed with hatred and a craving for revenge? While there was some degree of satisfaction in getting your own back, you knew it had brought out the worst in you.

v44. “love your enemies”.

Can you identify people who have suffered some terrible wrongdoing and have found the generosity of heart to respond with compassion and goodwill?

v48, v45. “You must therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect... causing the sun to rise on the bad people as well as good”

From life experience, can you identify situa-

tions or events where you have encountered the power of goodness to overcome evil, light to conquer darkness and love to banish hatred?

Responding

Having recognised God's presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Father, I remember the times that I felt badly let down, hurt and distressed. I desperately wanted to lash out and strike back, to respond with an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". Trusting in your love and mercy, the one who causes "the sun to rise on bad as well as good", I found the strength, on occasions, to reach out with compassion, mercy and goodwill.

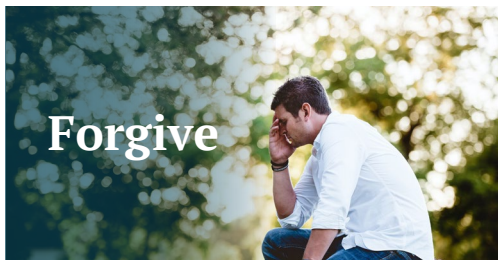
Forgive me for the times when I have been unable to do so and have been consumed with destructive feelings and actions towards those who have wronged me.

Father, your son Jesus obviously believes we are capable of so much more than we think we are. Help us to be open to your healing grace and to be channels of your light and your love so that we may

be truly "your sons and daughters" at work in the world today.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God's presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. "**Be Perfect**".



Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight or understanding has been given to you into the meaning of forgiveness, tolerance and acceptance of others? It might read something like this: **Knowing my own need for mercy and that there is more to the other person than the wrong they have done me, is the beginning of the journey to forgiveness and freedom.**



Children

Reading

Jesus encourages his followers to let go of their desire for revenge, to let go of their refusal to go the extra mile for others, to let go of their hatred for the people who have hurt them. Jesus reminds his listeners that everyone they meet, those who are easy to love and those who are more difficult to love, are created lovingly by God and should be prayed for. Jesus believes that this limitless love will allow his disciples to be perfect like their heavenly Father.

Recognising

Can you remember meeting a 'Jesus person' who forgave, supported, and loved you to the maximum despite the hurtful things you had said or done?

Can you remember a time when you resisted the temptation to retaliate, when you agreed to go the extra mile for someone, or when you loved and prayed for someone who had hurt you or someone you loved?

Responding

Father, I thank you for the strength to turn

the other cheek, for the patience to go the extra mile, and for the love to share with those who have hurt me.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I retaliated, set out to get revenge, refused to do a little bit extra to help someone in need, and for holding hatred in my heart.

Father, I ask that you grant me the grace to be a person who seeks to be as perfect as you are through my forgiving, generous and loving words and actions.

Resting

Rest in the generous embrace of the Father by repeating "BE PERFECT" for as long as it is possible. May you be filled with life as you are drawn deeper into the loving presence of the Father.

Reflecting

Genuine love without limits is demanding and deeply challenges every part of a person.

Lenten Lectio Series

Lectio Booklet-Journeying with the Gospels of Lent-Year A (Now available). Meditate on the Way-Living the Word Podcast accompanies the series (Available from next week on all podcast platforms).

Further resources: lectio.newrydominican.com

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.