

Day 240 – Sunday, November 15

The gospel today is about the last judgement--separating the sheep from the goats. I believe that the separation will be based on how we have shared God love with those around us. To accentuate this gospel, I include the following.

In the United States few public figures have spoken more plainly and powerfully about Jesus' teaching to love our enemies than the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This was not an abstract theological question for Dr. King. He wrestled practically and at great cost with how to love his enemies, both through prayer and through nonviolent direct action. This passage is an excerpt from King's sermon "Loving Your Enemies."

When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. . . .

Probably no admonition of Jesus has been more difficult to follow than the command to "love your enemies." Some people have sincerely felt that its actual practice is not possible. It is easy, they say, to love those who love you, but how can one love those who openly and insidiously seek to defeat you? . . .

This command of Jesus challenges us with new urgency. Upheaval after upheaval has reminded us that modern humanity is traveling along a road called hate, in a journey that will bring us to destruction. . . . Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, the command to love one's enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Love even for enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our world. Jesus is not an impractical idealist: he is the practical realist.

I am certain that Jesus understood the difficulty inherent in the act of loving one's enemy. He never joined the ranks of those who talk glibly about the easiness of the moral life. He realized that every genuine expression of love grows out of a consistent and total surrender to God. So when Jesus said "Love your enemy," he was not unmindful of its stringent qualities. Yet he meant every word of it. Our responsibility as Christians is to discover the meaning of this command and seek passionately to live it out in our daily lives. . . .

When Jesus bids us to love our enemies, he is speaking of neither *eros* [romantic love] nor *philia* [reciprocal love of friends]; he is speaking of *agape*, understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all people. Only by following this way and responding with this type of love are we able to be children of our Father who is in Heaven.

"Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, champagne in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!" (Hunter S. Thompson)

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein