



Bringing Home the Word

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time February 19, 2017

Love Your Neighbor

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I've never met a person who found the title of this article easy to follow. Some people practice every day and are better at it than others. I've been fortunate to know one or two of them. Most of us are good at loving in the abstract. As an Irish Catholic, I love the people who continue the troubles in Ireland. As an American, I love those who have attacked our country and those who embrace a different political view.

It's pretty easy to love people you don't know. Where I fall down is in the concrete, day-to-day loving. I find it really hard to love the people who don't love or even like me. I find it even harder to love those who have hurt me or members of my family. The difficulty of Jesus' words strike home when they become personal. We come face to face with our own unloving ways and unloving hearts. This is precisely where the grace of baptism comes into play. It's natural to feel hurt and anger when someone wounds us deeply. It's human to want to return hurt for hurt with words, behaviors, or even fists.

Jesus invites us into a different path—one from which we can love others in their woundedness and receive the love and healing of God for our own wounds. Jesus knows that only the path of love leads to life. Any other path will lead to our eventual destruction.

Who do you need to love today? †

*It's pretty easy
to love people
you don't know.*

Sunday Readings

Leviticus 19:1–2, 17–18

"Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your own people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

1 Corinthians 3:16–23

"If any one among you considers himself wise in this age, let him become a fool so as to become wise."

Matthew 5:38–48

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

A Word From Pope Francis

Today we are living in a world which is growing ever "smaller" and where, as a result, it would seem to be easier for all of us to be neighbors....Nonetheless, divisions, which are sometimes quite deep, continue to exist within our human family....In a world like this, media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all....The walls which divide us can be broken down only if we are prepared to listen and learn from one another.

—Communication at the service of an authentic culture of encounter, June 1, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who do you struggle to love?
- In what ways can you show you love your neighbor in your day-to-day life?



The Body of Christ

By Jeffery D. VonLehmen

There is no doubt that a body-and-blood relationship exists between a mother and her child. But they don't think of each other as body and blood. They think about the human relationship between them, whether or not it is mutually loving. It's the same way in the eucharistic celebration. We have body-and-blood relationship with God in Christ. In this encounter, we no longer get stuck on elements of

bread and wine, body and blood. This is because we experience persons instead of things, relationships instead of magic. Real reverence has to be for the person of Christ and for all people for whom he died—the two are inseparable.

We cannot have reverence for the Body and Blood of Christ—the person of Christ—if we knock down those for whom he died out of love. For this reason, people are the body of Christ.

Scripture says it so well. "What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me" (Matthew 25:45).

In speaking of the condemnation of the unjust steward, Matthew's Gospel says, "So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart" (Matthew 18:35).

It is simple: we must have reverence for one another. We cannot help but want a community of compassion, mercy, peace, and justice if we recognize that we all come from the same womb of God, the love of God poured out into our hearts through the outpouring of the Spirit, signed and sealed in the body-and-blood relationship we have in Christ. †

Source: *Catholic Update*,
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Compassion and Companions

By Fr. John Bartunek, LC, SThD

Eating together brings people into a basic common space and activity that serves as a catalyst for mutual knowledge and growth in intimacy. When we share a meal, we share our presence and our vulnerability. There is no perfect person. We are all incomplete. And that's OK. It's how we are designed.

While our family gatherings during the holiday season are filled with shared meals, we also know that family get-togethers are not always characterized by unadulterated joy. The dysfunctions at work in our relationships can't hide so well during those times of companionship. The wounds and the unresolved misunderstandings are often exposed when we come together to share a common table.

As children we often experience only the good side of those family gatherings. That's how I remember it. Every year, a member of my family would host everyone. How I used to look forward to each gathering! Seeing my cousins, playing games, sitting around with the adults while they talked and laughed, exploring my uncle's house or Grandmother's apartment building with my sisters. The food was a big attraction, too.

I vividly remember sitting at the grownups' table and gazing with fond affection at everyone. I really didn't understand everything they were talking about, but there was my grandmother's wise face, my aunt's sparkling eyes, my uncle's mischievous smile, and my dad's tough but somehow comforting solemnity. It didn't occur to me to criticize them. I accepted them and they accepted me. We

were unique, companions on a special day. And that was delightful. This is the attitude we should take with us into the world. An acceptance, not necessarily of others' actions, but of their being members of our family.

Source: *Winter Meditations*,
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Lord, you command me to love my neighbor. May your love dispel the hatred and resentment in my heart so that I may love all people unconditionally.


— From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 20–25

Mon. Weekday:
Sir 1:1–10 / Mk 9:14–29
Tues. Weekday:
Sir 2:1–11 / Mk 9:30–37
Wed. Feast of the Chair of St. Peter:
1 Pt 5:1–4 / Mt 16:13–19

Thurs. St. Polycarp:
Sir 5:1–8 / Mk 9:41–50
Fri. Weekday:
Sir 6:5–17 / Mk 10:1–12
Sat. Weekday:
Sir 17:1–15 / Mk 10:13–16

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