

Trinity News

Epiphany VII Matthew 5:38-48 Holding a Child and Holding Feelings

"Love your neighbour and hate your enemy". We have no script from the Jews to substantiate this quotation in our text. Love and hate are very inflammable matters in humanity. Christ tells us to love our enemies. Love of an enemy does not condone enmity. It promotes solutions to enmity. It echoes Lincoln's words that the best way to remove one's enemies is to make them one's friends.

We can flare up into hatred more quickly than we would like to admit. Ann Ulanova suggests that "Knowing we hate makes us more responsible and less dangerous." Winnicot wrote that "The danger is not in aggression, but in the repression of aggression." When we hold a child, if we hold the child too closely, then it can be hurt. If we hold it too loosely it falls. With anger, if we hold it too tightly, then it causes damage. If we let it go, then it falls into oblivion. As with love, the tighter we hold on to it the more damage it does. We have to get the tension right.

"Pray for those who persecute you" may be impossible for a time. We need a healing space when we are wounded. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" lives out the words of loving one's enemies and praying for those who persecute us. Christ considered it so important for his own inner peace that he said these words when he was being fastened to the Cross at Calvary. It was also a prayer for others. We never know fully what another person's reasons are for what they say and do. Perhaps we have some inspired guesses sometimes!

Finding the right tension/balance between holding on to real feelings and letting them go is made a condition for entry into heaven as God's children: "So that you may be children of your Father in heaven." We are reminded in this text that the sun rises on both good and evil people and that the rain that falls to refresh the earth and its peoples does not know of righteous or unrighteous people. The intention of Christ's message here may be that ultimate judgement belongs with God and that we are all within the sight of and care of God.

"Maganda umaga po" may have no reward in heaven, but it is polite. Loving another person may bring no reward in heaven, but it does bring earthly consolations. Becoming wise, discovering maturity as those made in the image of a heavenly Father is our goal. Maturity is found by rediscovering the lost fragments of our lives. We are never complete but in passing moments we can enter shafts of connection that are complete in themselves. This is sometimes incredibly beautiful, but we may also find that such assured happiness is a lonely matter. An old movie has a French duke who has feelings for the governess of his children. His disturbed wife sends her away, and as they part the duke says to her, "My only happiness will be in sharing your loneliness". Beauty of relationships sometimes brings loneliness.

Another tradition speaks of the three poisons of anger, greed and ignorance as things that disturb and wound us. The last poison, ignorance, is named as the root cause of all suffering. Pilar Jennings writes from within her tradition that "Anger was identified as the first poison for its ability to sabotage and corrode our ability to feel and express compassion." Anger is linked to hatred, and Christ identified hatred as one of the root causes of human suffering. Let us be aware of it, and then we will see it as an impostor for truly human conduct.

Bishop Arthur Jones

TO PLAN:

Feb. 22, Tuesday.

- Bible Study, 10am

Feb. 24, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel.

📖NEXT WEEK'S

READINGS: Isaiah

49:8-18; Psalm 62;

1 Corinthians 4:1-5,8-13;

Matthew 6:24-34

Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for Diana Croyston, JPeter, Beryl Tanner, Douglas Tanner, Fidelia Matthews, Carrie Angus, Eric Williamson, Gloria Domingo, Fr. Barry Cumberland, Marian Kermanshahchi, Rosaline Soulsby, Gitte Volk, Robert Go, Marie Cheung, Hajie Agustin, Eufrocena Quiapos, Rebecca Thompson, Emilie Nauntofte, Ron Jacob, Jovel Llagas, Ema Duhaylongsod, Len Cabili, Zeny dela Cruz, Josephine Maraño, Binnie Gooding.