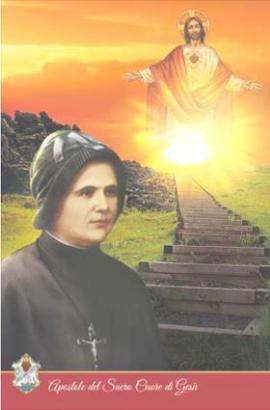




## GFASC Holiness Reflection 12



### TO LOVE THOSE WHO HURT YOU

**Luke 6: 27-35** - But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit [is] that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

**Mother Clelia:** “Charity’s sacrifice embraces friends and enemies, benefactors and persecutors. We must love even those who hate us, who have hurt us with their words and actions, because all are children of God and God does not want us to hate any of His children. This love for enemies has the added advantage that you are more sure of loving them with a supernatural and meritorious love, while love for friends or benefactors risks being purely natural and without merit.” (*Spiritual Anthology* pp. 91-92)

“If there is icy coldness among you, try to melt it with love and holy charity” (*Spiritual Anthology* p. 91).

**Pope Francis:** Each day of our journey is marked by God's presence. He guides our steps with the power of the grace that the Spirit pours into our hearts to make them capable of loving. *It is the time of mercy* for each and all, since no one can think that he or she is cut off from God's closeness and the power of his tender love. *It is the time of mercy* because those who are weak and vulnerable, distant and alone, ought to feel the presence of brothers and sisters who can help them in their need. *It is the time of mercy* because the poor should feel that they are regarded with respect and concern by others who have overcome indifference and discovered what is essential in life. *It is the time of mercy* because no sinner can ever tire of asking forgiveness and all can feel the welcoming embrace of the Father. (Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Miseria*, at the Conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, par. 21, November 20, 2016)

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### **A story**

There was a young man with an irascible nature. One day he decided to visit the village wise man to ask for his help. "Wise one, help me. I can't make any friends. No one wants to be around me because I am often critical and irritable."

The wise man said, "Take this box of nails. Hammer a nail into the fence every time you realize that you have made too severe a judgment, or have criticized someone unjustly, or became extremely angry, or were too sarcastic, or have said anything unkind to someone. When you reach the point of not having to hammer any more nails, return here to me."

The young man nodded and left. The first days were a disaster: he hammered 37 nails into the fence. Then gradually the number decreased. The young man became increasingly aware of his reactions and was able to control them. He also discovered that it was easier to remain calm than to hammer nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came in which he did not hammer any more nails. He returned to the wise man very proud of his accomplishment. "It was difficult, but I did it. Here are the remaining nails." The wise man smiled. "Very good," he said to him. "Now you are ready for the second part.

Return to the people you have accused, judged, or offended in some way and sincerely ask forgiveness for your behavior. Each time you do so, remove a nail from the fence. Once you have removed all the nails, return here to me.”

The young man nodded and left. This seemed like a truly difficult task, but he decided to take it on fully. After a few weeks, he removed the last nail from the fence. He returned to the wise man and proudly placed the box of nails before him. “Look, here are all the nails that I removed from the fence. There is not even one left in the fence.”

“Very good,” said the wise man. “Now come with me.” The wise man led him to the fence and the young man was happy to show him that not one nail remained there. The wise man asked, “What do you see now?” “A fence with holes from the nails I removed.” “There, that is the point. The fence will never be what it was before. When you say things in anger, they leave a wound, just like these holes. You cannot plant a knife in the flesh of a man and then pull it out. No matter how many times you say, “I’m sorry,” the wound will still be there. Even if you ask pardon of a person whom you have hurt, the hole remains. Our words live on forever. It is much better to speak words of love and understanding so that in time you can see their fruits.”

The pride on the young man’s face quickly disappeared. The wise man continued: “Here, take these seeds. Each time you say a word of love and understanding, plant a seed in your garden. You no longer need to return to me, but remember to thank God when you are able to enjoy the company of your friends in the shade of the plants that will grow.”

It is not possible, then, to erase what we have said or done, just as it is not possible to remove the holes from the fence. However, we can learn to ask forgiveness for our mistakes and try our best not to make them again.

## **PLEDGE**

- Ask pardon of someone you have hurt and pray for that person.
- Place all the offenses you have received into the Heart of Jesus so that you can experience His peace and love.
- Try to treat all people well, especially those who have hurt you.

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## Prayer for the Grace to Forgive

Jesus, you are the physician of soul and body: we believe that you can heal us. You ask only faith of us: "Your faith has saved you!" Lord, strengthen the faith of each of us so that it may be solid and strong, a faith that believes that all things are possible to you.

Wounds and offenses make us restless: there is no peace without forgiveness. I pray, then: O Jesus, give me the grace of forgiveness! Pardon, O Jesus, the offenses I caused when I hurt and insulted others, when I wished others ill. Forgive me, Jesus! As I ask you to forgive me, I now forgive others, I forgive those who have hurt me at any time and in any way: with their words, actions, or injustices. I forgive them! Let me love them, as our Mother teaches us: "Pray to be able to love the one who offends you, until you are able to see her good qualities."

O Jesus, give me love for those who have hurt me, those whom I do not like, who are a burden to me, or who are for me a cross. Within me I say now to the one who has hurt me, "I love you, I forgive you! I love you because Jesus loves you, I forgive you because Jesus forgives you!"

Continue to pray to love those who have hurt you.

*(Silent prayer)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

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*"If I had true charity, I would not be suspicious. God Himself forbids me to judge my neighbor harshly so as not to be judged by Him with the same severity with which I allow myself to judge others." (Mother Clelia Diary)*

