

"The only possible measure is to love without measure"

You fulfill a demanding plan of life: you rise early, you pray, you frequent the sacraments, you work or study a lot, you are sober and mortified, but you are aware that something is missing.

June 20

Consider this in your conversation with God: since holiness, or the struggle to achieve it, is the fullness

of charity, you must look again at your love of God and your love of others for his sake. Then you may discover, hidden in your soul, great defects that you have not even been fighting against. You may not be a good son, a good brother, a good companion, a good friend, a good colleague. And, if you love your "holiness" in a disordered manner, you are envious. You sacrifice yourself in many small personal details, and so you are attached to yourself, to your own person. Deep down you do not live for God or for others, but only for yourself.

(Furrow, 739)

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his divine command of charity to all who are ready to listen with an open mind. At the end, by way of summary, he says, 'Love your enemies, and do good to them, and lend to them, without any hope of return; then your reward will be a

rich one, and you will be children of the most High, generous like him towards the thankless and unjust. Be merciful, then, as your Father is merciful.'

Mercy is more than simply being compassionate. Mercy is the overflow of charity, which brings with it also an overflow of justice. Mercy means keeping one's heart totally alive, throbbing in a way that is both human and divine, with a love that is strong, self-sacrificing and generous. Here is what St Paul has to say about charity in his hymn to this virtue, 'Charity is patient, is kind; charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent; does not claim its rights, cannot be provoked, does not brood over an injury; takes no pleasure in wrong-doing, but rejoices at the victory of truth; sustains, believes, hopes, endures, to the last.' (Friends of God, 232)

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