



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 24 February 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel passage (cf. Lk 6:27-38) concerns a central point that characterizes Christian life: *love for enemies*. Jesus' words are clear: "I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (vv. 27-38). And this is not *optional*, it is a command. It is not for everyone, but for the disciples, whom Jesus calls "you that hear". He is well aware that loving enemies exceeds our possibilities, but this is why he became man: not to leave us as we are, but to transform us into men and women capable of a greater love, that of his Father and ours. This is the love that Jesus gives to those who 'hear him'. Thus it becomes possible! With him, thanks to his love, to his Spirit, we are able to love even those who do not love us, even those who do us harm.

In this way, Jesus wants God's love to triumph over hatred and rancour in every heart. The logic of love, which culminates in Christ's Cross, is a Christian's badge and induces us to meet everyone with the heart of brothers and sisters. But how is it possible to overcome human instinct and the worldly law of retaliation? Jesus provides the answer in the same Gospel passage: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (v. 36). Those who hear Jesus, who make an effort to follow him even at a cost, become children of God, and begin to truly resemble the Father who is in heaven. We become capable of things we never thought we could say or do, and of which we would have been rather ashamed, but which now give us joy and peace instead. We no longer need to be violent, with words and gestures: we discover that we are capable of tenderness and goodness; and we sense that all of this comes not from ourselves but from him! And thus we do not brag about it but are grateful for it.

There is nothing greater and more fruitful than love: it bestows all dignity to the person, while, on the contrary, hatred and vengeance decrease it, marring the beauty of the creature made in God's image.

This command, to respond to insult and wrongdoing with love, has created a new culture in the world: “a culture of mercy” — we need to learn this well! And properly practice this culture of mercy — which “can set in motion a real cultural revolution” (Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 20). It is the revolution of love, in which the protagonists are the martyrs of all times. And Jesus assures us that our behaviour, inspired by love for those who do us harm, will not be in vain. He tells us: “forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you” (vv. 37-38). This is beautiful. God will give us something beautiful if we are generous, merciful. We must forgive because God has forgiven us and always forgives us. If we do not forgive completely, we cannot expect to be forgiven completely. However, if our hearts are open to mercy, if we seal forgiveness with a brotherly embrace and secure the bonds of communion, we proclaim to the world that it is possible to overcome evil with good. At times it is easier for us to remember the harm they have done to us and not the good things; to the point that there are people who have this habit and it becomes a sickness. They are “collectors of injustice”: they only remember the bad things done. And this is not a path. We must do the opposite, Jesus says. Remember the good things, and when someone comes with some gossip, and speaks ill of another, say: “Yes, perhaps ... but he has this good quality...”. Turn the discussion around. This is the revolution of mercy.

May the Virgin Mary help us to let our heart be touched by this holy word of Jesus, burning like fire, that it may transform us and make us able to do good without reciprocation, *doing good without reciprocation*, witnessing everywhere to the victory of love.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, this morning a very important Meeting on the theme of the protection of minors concluded here in the Vatican. Patriarchs, Presidents of all Episcopal Conferences, Heads of the Catholic Oriental Churches, Representatives of men and women Superiors of religious Congregations and many of my Collaborators in the Roman Curia, came together. As you know, the issue of the sexual abuse of minors by members of the clergy has for some time given rise to a serious scandal in the Church and in public opinion, both for the tragic suffering of the victims and due to the unjustifiable lack of attention given to them and to covering for the guilty by people with responsibility in the Church.

Since it is a widespread problem on every Continent, I wanted, we Pastors of the Catholic communities throughout the world, to address it together, in a co-responsible and collegial manner. We listened to the voices of the victims; we prayed and asked forgiveness from God and from the people who have been harmed; we acknowledged our responsibilities, our duty to do justice in truth, to radically reject all forms of abuse of power, of conscience and of a sexual nature.

We wish that all the Church’s activities and places may always be safe places for minors; that all

possible measures may be taken so that similar crimes may not be repeated; that the Church may return to being absolutely credible and trustworthy in her mission of service and education for the little ones, according to Jesus' teaching.

In this way we will know how to cooperate wholeheartedly and effectively, together with all people of good will and the positive forces of society, in all countries on the international level, so that the extremely grave scourge of violence against hundreds of millions of minors, boys and girls, young women and young men, may be thoroughly confronted, in all its forms, throughout the world.

I address a cordial greeting to all of you, pilgrims from Rome, from Italy and from different countries.

I greet the faithful from the Diocese of Seville, those from Trieste, Agropoli and Venegono Inferiore.

I greet the group that has come on the occasion of "Rare Disease Day", and I hope that patients and their families may be appropriately supported in their difficult journey, at both the medical and legislative levels.

And I wish a happy Sunday to all of you. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!