



Ask, Father James:

“Love your enemies”

Ever since Cain’s fratricide of his own brother, Abel (Gen. 4:1-16), an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth as the people of ancient times practiced and still some people do today, has never resolved conflict but instead, still perpetuates the cycle of violence. Jesus comes with a new principle to overcome conflict. This Jesus’ command to Love the enemy flows from his ultimate commandment; Love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31). Jesus gives the rationale for love of the enemy: “so that you may the children of your Father in heaven...” (Matthew 5:45). When a Christian loves neighbour, whether friend or foe, they practice the Beatitude: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Peacemaking is difficult. Jesus outlines some of the challenges - to turn the other cheek, go the second mile, and give freely – He says, in taking these risks, one seizes the initiative to find ways that break out of vicious cycles of vengeance and violence. This no doubt is one of the hardest teachings of Jesus. It seems incomprehensible, daunting, too idealistic for reality, but I dare to say, every thinking adult should teach this precept to our children and our grandchildren, because it is the key to overcoming the cycle of violence.

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