



Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, you became a man in order to show me, in your own flesh and blood, the way to holiness. In every word and deed of yours recorded in the Gospel, you teach and reveal to me the secret of a life worthy of eternity. I believe that you are with me now, and that you will use these moments of prayer to increase my faith, hope and love. Here I am, Lord, to know, love and serve you with all my heart. Amen.

Petition: Lord, help me to seek holiness out of love for you and others. Amen.

1. "Be Perfect" Who is telling us to be perfect? Christ the Word, he through whom all things were made, through whom we came into being: our Lord, our Creator, who from all eternity longs to see each one of us be made perfect in love. This is not a suggestion; it is a command. He says it to his disciples with energy, even knowing that for them alone it is impossible. For God, though, nothing is impossible. We are reminded today that our saintliness is a possibility; it is God's plan. Miracles happen when we believe. God is not through with any one of us yet. All God asks is that we be perfect – not a whole life in one fell swoop – but, rather, every present moment, one at a time. That is what I have – this present moment. This is what I have to perfect.

2. Why Does God Command Us to Become Perfect? God's demand that we seek and strive after the perfection of holiness becomes more understandable when we contemplate the increasingly dire situation of our world. That world, so

gravely in need of Christ's salvation, is the starkest and most palpable reason why any one of us should pursue holiness. What is the value of Christian holiness in the world? One early Christian apologist put it in these terms:

To sum up all in one word -- what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians, though in nowise injured, because they abjure pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and [loves also] the members; Christians likewise love those that hate them" (From the Letter to Diognetus).

3. Seeking Holiness is a Labor of Love: In a world of shifting sands, we can offer solid ground; in a world of blind forces of spiritual and material violence, we can offer the persuasive power of Christian goodness. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta was heard to say that holiness is not the privilege of a few, but the obligation of all. When with simple and profound faith, we delve into that link between our striving for holiness and the salvation of souls, we can discover a new impetus and a new strength. The challenge of seeking holiness can become a labor of love, driven by a heart aflame with zeal for the salvation of all our brothers and sisters.

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, the world needs men and women of God; the world needs saints. I know this. I know you call me in a personal, urgent and insistent way to seek my holiness. For the sake of my brothers and sisters, for their salvation, Lord, make me holy. Amen.

Resolution: I will dedicate some time today to pray to Our Lady and entrust to her, with living faith and childlike simplicity, the entire project of my personal sanctification.