

Reflection Friday 5th Week Lent 2024

In today's reading the Jewish people accuse Jesus of blasphemy. So, what is blasphemy? Blasphemy is speaking against God in a contemptuous, scornful, or abusive manner, and as such is a grave violation of charity towards God.

Too often we have made up our minds about someone for what we believe are good reasons. Once we do this however, we develop arguments why we believe this. The Jewish authorities facing Jesus had made up their minds about Jesus and were unable to find any good in him. Although the Old Testament called for vengeance, Jesus was never did. He came to heal, to show people the errors of their judgements in order to help them be more compassionate, more forgiving, more caring not just for those who are good to them but to those who were not.

*Martin Luther King, Jr. There may come a time when it will be possible for you to humiliate your worst enemy or even to defeat him, but in order to love the enemy you must not do it... The Greek language has another word [for love]. It is **agape**. Agape is more than romantic love. Agape is more than friendship. Agape is understanding, redemptive goodwill for everyone. Agape is an overflowing love, a spontaneous love, which seeks nothing in return. And theologians would say that it is the love of God operating in the human heart. When you rise to love on this level you love everyone, not because you like them, not because their ways appeal to you, not because they are of worth to you, but you love everyone because God loves them. And you rise to the noble heights of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. And I think this is what Jesus means when he says, "**Love your enemies.**"*