

SACRED HEART OF JESUS: Mercy in action



*“Love is patient, love is kind;
love is not jealous or boastful;
it is not arrogant or rude.
Love does not insist on its own way,
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all
things, endures all things”*

(1 Cor 13:4-7).

Pope Francis says...

Love is not irritable or resentful

If the first word of Paul’s hymn spoke of the need for a patience that does not immediately react harshly to the weaknesses and faults of others, the word he uses next has to do more with an interior indignation provoked by something from without. It refers to a violent reaction within, a hidden irritation that sets us on edge where others are concerned, as if they were troublesome or threatening and thus to be avoided. To nurture such interior hostility helps no one. It only causes hurt and alienation. Indignation is only healthy when it makes us react to a grave injustice; when it permeates our attitude towards others it is harmful.

The Gospel tells us to look to the log in our own eye (cf. Mt 7:5). Christians cannot ignore the persistent admonition of God’s word not to nurture anger: “Do not be overcome by evil” (Rm 12:21). “Let us not grow weary in doing good” (Gal 6:9). It is one thing to sense a sudden surge of hostility and another to give into it, letting it take root in our hearts: “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26). My advice is never to let the day end without making peace with your brother or sister. “And how am I going to make peace? By getting down on my knees? No! Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony among you will be restored. Just a little caress, no words are necessary. But do not let the day end without making peace with your brother or sister”. Our first reaction when we are annoyed should be one of heartfelt blessing, asking God to bless, free and heal that person. “On the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Pet 3:9). If we must fight evil, so be it; but we must always say “no” to violence between us. (From *Amoris Laetitia* 103 -104)

The Word of God says...

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. For: “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears turned to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.” (1 Peter 3:8-12)