

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 forgives

Once we allow ill will to take root in our hearts, it leads to deep resentment. Love “takes no account of evil”; “it is not resentful”. The opposite of resentment is forgiveness, which is rooted in a positive attitude that seeks to understand other people’s weaknesses and to excuse them. As Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). Yet we keep looking for more and more faults, imagining greater evils, presuming all kinds of bad intentions, and so resentment grows and deepens. Thus, every mistake or lapse from others can harm the bond of love and the stability of our relationships. Something is wrong when we see every problem as equally serious; in this way, we risk being unduly harsh with the failings of others. The just desire to see our rights respected turns into a thirst for vengeance rather than a reasoned defense of our dignity.

Today we recognize that being able to forgive others implies the liberating experience of understanding and forgiving ourselves. Often our mistakes, or criticism we have received from loved ones, can lead to a loss of self-esteem. We become distant from others, avoiding affection and fearful in our interpersonal relationships. Blaming others becomes falsely reassuring. We need to learn to pray over our past history, to accept ourselves, to learn how to live with our limitations, and even to forgive ourselves, in order to have this same attitude towards others.

All this assumes that we ourselves have had the experience of being forgiven by God, justified by his grace and not by our own merits. We have known a love that is prior to any of our own efforts, a love that constantly opens doors, promotes and encourages. If we accept that God’s love is unconditional, that the Father’s love cannot be bought or sold, then we will become capable of showing boundless love and forgiving others even if they have wronged us. Otherwise, our life will no longer be a place of understanding, support and encouragement, but rather one of constant tension and mutual criticism. (From *Amoris Laetitia* 105, 107-108)

The Word of God says...

He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test.”
(Lk 11:1-4)