

# Spiritual Commentary on the Gospel Readings of the Days of the Great Lent by Father Louka Sidarous (4)

Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

The Gospel according to Luke 6:33-38

"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

The Lord gives a stern warning concerning judging others. Judging others is a shameful sin that angers the Beloved One.

Before the Lord said "Judge not, and you shall not be judged" He said: "love, do good and lend". He encourages a positive action by the spirit before He prohibits a negative action; that is, judging. When a person conducts himself or herself according to the spiritual law of Christ which is generosity, giving and doing good even to those who hurt us, then there is no place for judging others. There is no place for judging where there is love. There is no place for criticism where there is true service.

I ought to love my brethren! Let this be the first step. It is impossible to say that I love my enemies and do good to those who hate me and pray for those who spitefully use me, if I am yet to learn how to love those who are close to me. If I stumble in the first step how can I take more steps. If I fail climbing the first step of a ladder, how then am I to rise to higher steps?!

Recognize who you are my soul. Practice charity and love for they are the only safe refuge. Love saves the soul from the impurities of judging. Strengthen the ties of love and extend its roots deep into the heart. Let everyone be regarded beautiful in your sight. Isn't everyone born of God?! Love God in every person, for if hatred dwells in someone's heart it will deprive him of the love of God.

+ 'Give and it will be given to you'

Lord, teach me. You gave Yourself. You broke Your body to give to us. You became poor to enrich us.

Lord, teach me. Let me not be trapped in my ego. Let me come out of my selfishness, so that I can give without measure. Many times, grace presented to me opportunities to give, but my hand was paralyzed, and my heart dried up, and I clung to giving sparingly and I shut the doors of mercy.

Lord, help me overcome my rebellious ego that is self-centered. Let me get out and experience being outside this dark circle. I will get out to carry the burdens of my brethren (exodus 2:11) not to just look at them.

Jesus my God, give me that I may give. I know that you give me abundantly no matter how much I give.

+ “For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

This saying scares me. My measures, Lord, will not be fitting: measures of judging, backbiting and lack of love, measures of scarcity with others, hardness in speech, or measures of boasting, pride and greed, measures of not accepting others, lack of love, and refusal to give or serve.

What kind of measures are these? My master I beseech you to rid me of such measures. Let me throw them away and never use them when I deal with others. Instead give me from Your measures, measures of mercy, love, compassion on my brethren, even the weak and the sinner. Give me the measure of humility so I can wash the feet of my brethren without complaining. Give Your own measure. You are so ready to give and willing to share abundantly. I will, thus, take from Your hand and give to others. Teach me to love, and love, and love.

+ “a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom”.

Blessed are those who give the measure of mercy abundantly. I learned that the Lord saved as a reward this measure that we use on earth to be given to us in heaven.

O wretched man that I am!

Fr. Louka Sidarous

(4/22)