

Scripture Readings: Colossians 3:12-17 ✕ Psalm 150 1b-6 ✕ Luke 6:27-38

A story is told of a woman who bumped into a stranger. "Excuse me," she apologized, "I wasn't watching where I was going." She was very polite and kind. That evening, while doing the dishes, her young son stood beside her. She turned, and nearly knocked him down. "Move out of the way" she said harshly, with a frown on her face. His tender heart was pierced with pain as he got out of her way. Later, when she sat down to rest, she remembered her courtesy to a stranger in contrast to her harshness to her own little boy.

Feeling remorse, she went to his room, knelt by his bedside and said, "I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you today." He threw his arms around her neck and whispered, "Oh, Mom, that's okay, I love you." Then he reached over to a bedside table for a bouquet of flowers. "Here" he said, "I picked these today because they're pretty, like you." Then she cried from mixed emotions of shame and happiness. She kissed him, and hugged him very close.

Jesus wants us to love our enemies, but first we must begin by truly loving our family and friends. Forgetfulness, pettiness, selfishness, bitterness, withdrawal, anger, frustration, apathy, laziness: all these wage constant war against really loving even those who are closest to us. Brother Giles, the companion and disciple of St. Francis of Assisi, once said, "It is a great grace to live at peace with those around you." Whoever manages to live in peace and love with others only does so by constant prayer and work. ✕