

When we read the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments, we find a God who has seen the misery of his people and wants to save them. He constantly takes the first step towards us. In today's readings, He shows us the answer He expects from us: "Be holy for I, the Lord your God, am holy. This is an order that God gives us; we are all called to holiness. This means that we must reject any thought of pride and hatred. In God, there is no room for revenge or grudge. Our God is love. This is what we are all called to.

For our part, it is obvious that we are far from the mark. We often fall back into the same sins; we find it hard to make peace with the one who harms us. But the Lord is there to lift us up and help us move forward. Pope Francis tells us that God never gets tired of forgiving us. He calls us all to holiness which is only love and sweetness. This probably seems very difficult to us. The problem is that we are often people of little faith. But with very poor means, the Lord is able to work wonders.

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians and us that we are "the temple of God". And since God is love, we can say that we are the "temple of love". If we are inhabited by this presence of God, it changes everything in our life. This love we receive from Him will make us more and more like Him. He will chase hatred, resentment, violence and all kind of wickedness; it is a love that will go to forgiveness. This is how we will be recognized as disciples of Christ.

In the Gospel reading, we hear Jesus speaking to his disciples gathered around him on the mountain. He reminds them of the commandment of the old covenant: "You have heard that it was said: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ...". God wanted to teach his people to limit revenge. We live in a world that suffers from escalating violence and hatred. Every day we hear about wars and terrorist attacks. How can we love those who persecute us and make us suffer?⁴

And yet, if we want to look like God, there is a new step to take: limiting revenge is progress. But in his speech on the mountain, Jesus invites us to go one step further: if we really want to be like our Heavenly Father, we must avoid all revenge and hatred. It is not a moral that Jesus teaches us, nor a lesson in knowing how to live. The most important thing is to find out who God is and to let us be transformed by his love.

In fact, we have false images of God; we find it hard to believe He is just love. And yet Jesus tells us very clearly: "God makes his sun to rise on the bad and the good and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust". At the time, the sun and the rain were considered blessings of God. To be like God is to welcome this universal love which is in Him to radiate and communicate it around us.

This Gospel joins us in a difficult world: to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us, this is indeed what is asked of us; it is on this path that Christ set out; there are many who followed him to the end: they forgave, they prayed for those who persecuted them, they were peacemakers and they made reconciliation. On this day, let us take time of prayer to draw from the source of the one who is Love.