

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Weekday Mass – Tuesday, June 16, 2020  
Cycle A

The commandment to love one's neighbor is a quotation from Lv 19:18 but the remainder of the verse = "and hate your enemy" is not from Scriptures. It probably came from an oral commentary inferred from the distinction between the Israelites/Jews and the pagans. To "hate" here means to "love less" or not to put on equal footing, as in the expression, "I loved Jacob but hated Esau". (Rom 9:13).

Against the popular Jewish understanding of love limited to fellow Jew/Israelite, Jesus extends the love-commandment to one's "enemies", i.e., outsiders. The sole motive is, "that you may be children of your heavenly Father". God may be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he is also the God and Father of all peoples. His choice of Israel is not an end of itself, but that through Israel, his blessing may go to the Gentiles as well. Proof of his care for everyone is the working of nature: the sun shines and the rain falls on people without distinction. To be "perfect" like the heavenly Father is to love the way the Father loves – all embracing, without discrimination.

It is said that it is humanly impossible to love everybody with the same intensity and attention. But love must be inclusive not exclusive. This is the kind of love the world needs today, an all embracing love. This is the way Jesus loves us, and the way we should love one another.