

LOVE THE UNLOVABLE

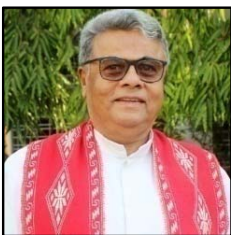
Today, we celebrate the feast of St. John Chrysostom. He was a bishop and an eloquent preacher. His eloquence came from a deep faith, and he was also known as a person with a very deep concern for the poor. His concern for the poor was so strong that many people in the Church at that time did not like him because he disturbed the system; he disturbed people who had no concern for the needy and the poor. Let us pray that in a small way we might also imitate him.

Dear sisters and brothers, the Lord Jesus is telling us to love, and it is not an easy love. It's not just a feeling but it is in very concrete actions. And it is the love for people who are unlovable. Jesus says love your enemies, and then he makes it explicit: who are my enemies? The people who hate you, the people who curse you, the people who treat you badly, the one who slaps you, the one who robs you...these are our enemies.

Most of us are very comfortable to love the people who are lovable: family members who are kind to us – we give to them in full measure. We return what we receive. But what about those who act badly with us, people who hurt us, people who do us harm? How do we love them? It requires superhuman strength. This is what God gives to us – the strength to love the unlovable.

The Gospel says that if we love only those who love us, we are no better than sinners who also do the same. God tell us to love the unlovable. Are there certain unlovable people around us? The Lord invites us to love them also.

Before we say the Lord's Prayer, and before we ask God our Father to give us the strength to love, I'd like to invite you to think of one person whom you find difficult to love because that person is not lovable according to you. Let us pray for that person, and let us pray that we may be able to overcome our dislike, our hatred, and love them. We pray for a moment in silence.



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