



Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

One of the things we have worked hard to teach our children for several generations now is that they are special, even gifted and able to do anything they want to do if they put their mind to it. This teaching has been in reaction to previous thinking that tended to devalue children in favor of adults. Children, especially when they were young, used to be treated as property requiring little attention (except by care givers who were also not valued by society) until they grew up. Children were often required to earn their keep from a young age, and were educated only in families of means. The old rule of childhood, “be seen but not heard” has been replaced by the idea that children are the center of the world to be indulged and praised.

The older view of children needed to be replaced, but the current thinking is also in need of revision. Current views are combined with a veneration of youth and a refusal to accept aging or value the maturity that should come with it. The result has been several generations of children and now adults who tend to have an excessive interest in and admiration for themselves – how they look; what they want; what they need. This emphasis on self-love, has become self-absorption for many, and has led to a sense of entitlement for self and a lack of empathy (care, sympathy, and concern) for others.

We are called to love ourselves. That is part of what Jesus said was the second most important commandment. However, the rest of the commandment is that we are called to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). That puts self-love and empathy with others on an equal footing. We must teach our children and ourselves that each of them, like each of us, is special with unlimited possibilities, but without loving others and looking for the special gifts they have to offer we are missing what Jesus meant for us.

Lord, we live in difficult times. We see all kinds of dangers ‘out there’ but are slow to see where we may be helping to create the problems we face. We also champion the first commandment: to love the Lord with all our being, but we sometimes forget that the second commandment is of equal importance. We must teach both commandments to our children and help them to follow both.

This week pray for:

- The continuing plight of refugees and other displaced persons around the world.
- Venezuela where the economy has collapsed, food, medicine, & other necessities are in short supply, and aid is not being allowed into the country.



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