

GOSPEL PEARLS

An enemy's hatred

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Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.' (Matthew 5,43-48)

Jesus firmly condemns the hatred against one's enemy that characterised ancient societies, but also modern ones. The Lord's disciples, by following His example, love even their persecutor and prays for them. This is what distinguishes Christian disciples from others and conforms them to the heart of Jesus. Who do you consider your enemy? Can you forgive them and love them?