

# *Lenten Reflections*

*March 9, 2020*



*St Francis Receiving the Stigmata – El Greco – Public Domain*

<https://art.thewalters.org/detail/6457/saint-francis-receiving-the-stigmata-2/>

Today's reading is most interesting. Upon reflection, I think most folks would say it is the Golden Rule reframed. The Golden Rule is generic enough for most religious traditions to find common ground within their values and belief systems. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

When we unpack the words of Lk. 6:36-38, we see something far more prescriptive, far more challenging than the platitude that the Golden Rule has too often become. Jesus is instructing his disciples (and us) to be merciful as God is merciful. Indeed, most people are merciful when they volunteer, or donate to a food pantry, or give someone a helping hand or contribute financially to disaster relief as well as many varied other ways to do good and help to make life a bit better for others. This is all good but is it enough?

Doing good works, though merciful, does not necessarily require us to step out of our comfort zone. However, when we take Jesus' challenge seriously that to be merciful means to stop judging, criticizing, and condemning others, we are being asked to stand in radical equality with others. Perhaps most challenging is Jesus' instruction to forgive those who have hurt us even when not requested. This kind of forgiveness requires that we stop judging, criticizing, or condemning the other person. Most of us have experienced been hurt by another, and in turn, we also have hurt people in our lives. Consider the outcome when someone forgives us for the pain we have caused them. We often experience a sense of gratitude, relief, and the ability to move on. With forgiveness comes the ability to release anger, hurt and not ruminate on the past. Forgiveness is a gift that is returned ten-fold.

Lent is an opportunity to practice 'prescriptive mercy' and ask for forgiveness if we have hurt someone and offer forgiveness to someone who has hurt us but with no strings attached. Forgiveness become a merciful gift, freely given and freely received.

*Dr. Dolores Henchy, Professor and Dean, Center for Academic Success*

## Monday of the Second Week in Lent

Lectionary: 230

### Reading 1 [DN 9:4B-10](#)

“Lord, great and awesome God,  
you who keep your merciful covenant toward those who love you  
and observe your commandments!  
We have sinned, been wicked and done evil;  
we have rebelled and departed from your commandments and your laws.  
We have not obeyed your servants the prophets,  
who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes,  
our fathers, and all the people of the land.  
Justice, O Lord, is on your side;  
we are shamefaced even to this day:  
we, the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem,  
and all Israel, near and far,  
in all the countries to which you have scattered them  
because of their treachery toward you.  
O LORD, we are shamefaced, like our kings, our princes, and our fathers,  
for having sinned against you.  
But yours, O Lord, our God, are compassion and forgiveness!  
Yet we rebelled against you  
and paid no heed to your command, O LORD, our God,  
to live by the law you gave us through your servants the prophets.”

### Responsorial Psalm [79:8, 9, 11 AND 13](#)

R. (see 103:10a) **Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.**  
Remember not against us the iniquities of the past;  
may your compassion quickly come to us,  
for we are brought very low.

R. **Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.**  
Help us, O God our savior,  
because of the glory of your name;  
Deliver us and pardon our sins  
for your name's sake.

R. **Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.**  
Let the prisoners' sighing come before you;  
with your great power free those doomed to death.  
Then we, your people and the sheep of your pasture,  
will give thanks to you forever;  
through all generations we will declare your praise.

R. **Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.**

### Verse Before The Gospel [JN 6:63C, 68C](#)

Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life;  
you have the words of everlasting life.

**Gospel [LK 6:36-38](#)**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged.

Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and gifts will be given to you;

a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing,  
will be poured into your lap.

For the measure with which you measure  
will in return be measured out to you.”