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3 SATURDAY

Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent

Deuteronomy 26: 16-19

Ps 118: 1-2, 4-5, 7-8

Matt 5: 43 - 48

Jesus called on His followers to be “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”. But how is that possible ? To be perfect is clearly beyond our reach and ability. When we recall our imperfections and weakness, our lack of progress or zeal, our struggle to live up to our Christian commitment, His invitation can maybe even be a discouragement sometimes. Some people are content with a minimalist attitude towards God, that is, to do just the minimum required to “pass” (like an examination) into heaven. Yet in Jesus’ view, the minimum for loving others also implies doing more than other people do. This is indeed a challenge. We know only too well our tendency to judge and feel superior to other people, especially anyone outside our own circle, whether the circle of family, of friends, of colleagues, of age or place or city or country..... the list of common discriminations is endless. We believe our heavenly Father cares for each of us, yet we find it hard ourselves to love certain ones of those He loves. We can even get into thinking that God’s love is unfair because (in our view) He seems to favour some whom we think ‘unworthy’. This Lent, may our penitence be a renewed focus on practical love for others. To pardon people who’ve offended or hurt us, pray for enemies and unfriendly people, share not merely our surpluses with people in need, behave justly towards people we have obligations to or responsibilities for, act positively to help people without help or voice to speak for them. That would be a true Lent, imitating in a small way God’s perfect love.

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