

The pure of heart do not proclaim "I have been faithful" but ask "Why have I been chosen?" The pure of heart are not those who are certain they are right but those who wonder whether God has made a mistake. They are not conscious of the fact that God has seen their virtue; rather, they cannot imagine how he overlooked their sins. The pure of heart wonder: "How can this come about?" Embarrassed and bewildered, they have little to say. "I am the handmaid of the Lord . . . let what you have said be done to me." The pure of heart declare in the Passover of their deliverance: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know . . . that I do nothing of myself."

We mentioned earlier that abandonment to the Father can be a dangerous procedure unless one adheres to a central moral imperative in the preaching of Jesus. One must love his enemies. If he does not, "abandonment" may easily drift into irresponsibility or passivity. The love of one's enemies, however, sums up the entire moral code and reveals to us whether we have indeed set ourselves aside. The human heart is pure through and through when it loves in the midst of its enemies, when it fears no evil because the Father is as much at work among one's enemies as he is among one's friends. When one has loved his enemies, he has done all there is to do.

How many Christians have never loved an enemy? Or, if we have, how long has it been since that last occurred? We count our moral achievements in terms of the objects we have not stolen, the sexual temptations we have resisted, the obligatory liturgical celebrations we may have attended, the lack of physical violence against our enemies. These moral actions, however, may be the achievements of cowards and hypocrites, of the unbelieving and the unfaithful. It is not as though they have no moral content at all; the moral content, however, is minimal.

The reason why some suppose Jesus may have been "vain" is because they have equated humility with the denial of one's own value. The humility by which some are canonized in the judgment of many is not humility but a combination of pious lies and subdued self-assertion. The only sign of humility is the love of one's enemies. When one loves his enemies, he says in effect that they are as worthy of life as he is, that the Kingdom of God does not depend upon the vindication of one's own cause. When one loves his enemies, he has accepted the fact that he is not the center of the universe. He is willing to admit that the grace of God may be at work, even in his own behalf, in the resistance and rejection he encounters from others. By love of enemies and by this standard alone can the humility of Jesus be measured. The "humble of heart" whom Jesus admires are those whose hearts have no hatred for their opponents.

The unity and harmony in the preaching of Jesus are evident in the doctrinal and moral center of his message. Unless one is abandoned to the Father, he has not the strength to love his enemies. Unless one loves his enemies, his concrete, sometimes bitter, even violent enemies, his "abandonment" to the Father is self-deceiving and self-destructive.

Purity is an act of mercy to the human family. One is merciful to his fellow men when he is abandoned to the Father. Such a man has no weapon in his hands, no defensive wall around his heart. He opens his arms to embrace, knowing that one may be crucified when his arms are open but unable to approach men in any other manner. Such a man comes

to give himself, not to judge whether others are moral or whether their doctrine is correct. In such a man, the mystery of God's fidelity is present. His arms are always open, often to embrace, sometimes because he has been crucified.

There is no way to use a weapon unless one's hands are closed. It is better to die young because one's arms have been opened and his heart vulnerable, as it always is when one's arms are open, than to live long with weapons and defenses, with clenched fists and a protected heart.

Mercy is given no one except by the pure of heart. The pure of heart do not siphon the energy of their friends in order to live, or destroy their enemies in order to gain safety. They open their arms as wide in the presence of the violent as in the homes of their friends. They dance and sing songs in the midst of their enemies. They are free, free from the fear of defending themselves, free to lay down their lives or take them up again, free to make peace because they fight no wars.

The pure of heart are God's act of mercy to us. They are in our midst as an act of compassion, as Spring occurs in the midst of our seasons or a flower in the midst of our cities or love in the midst of our deeds. The pure of heart are children given by God so that the world will not grow weary with age; they are the prophets who remind us of the fact that no one need be a stranger and that men really have no enemies. Unaware of their moral stature, they are innocent. Unconcerned with their orthodoxy, they are faith itself. Unprotected, they are the substance of life. They may weep as they feel the pain of the nails and the sting of hatred but they do not destroy their enemies to end their tears.

The pure of heart are redeemed by Jesus even though they may not know him. The pure of heart are those who say "Father" as easily as they say "God" or "brother." In the presence of their enemies and their unspeakable anguish, they are so pure that "forgive them" is spoken almost without a thought. And when all strength has been taken from them and all human resources exhausted, they are pure enough to find someone who loves them yet and to commend their spirit into his keeping.