

Thought for the day – Thursday 2nd February 2023

by Revd John Ohen

Conflicts

Almost all families have conflicts and not even the Royal family is exempt from conflict. It is alleged that the Arch- Bishop may be the mediator for the Royal family before this year's Coronation.

Do we have enemies? Or are there people who wish you or your family harm? Or would delight in hardship or difficulties we might suffer? Our prayer is that most of us don't have people in our lives who harbour ill will against us.

However, there must be some people who harbour us some ill will. There are also some people who do not like us for one reason or another. This is simply a fact of life. Many think that Christians have their heads in the clouds. Christians take their lead from Jesus who, especially in his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5. 5 – 7). Here Jesus addresses the issue head on and no messing about. The Torah, the Jewish law teaches that the way to live is to love our neighbour and hate our enemy, but Jesus transformed this understanding, teaching us to love both our neighbour and our enemy. In many cases they are the same person. The big question is why do we have to do this? Because God loves all of us, everyone even those we find totally unloving and wish us harm. The famous theologian Thomas Kempis put it very well when he said that "in Jesus, and for him, enemies and friends are to be loved."

It may help to see love as a weapon. Love does not hurt or damage but wins and softens, and when we love we put out the fire of hate. Nelson Mandela simply refused to hate his jailors. Nelson Mandela's New Musical is still going on in Young Vic. Waterloo. Abraham Lincoln said that the best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend. The most common objection to loving our enemy is that it is simply too hard to do, but by God's grace we can do it.

Bible Passage: [Matthew 5. 43 - 48](#)

Prayer:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our faith. Help us to know our faith more deeply, live our faith more fully and share our faith more freely.

Amen.