

MARCH 15, 2025 FATHER JOHN BERTAIO

"Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

That's quite an order. My dear friends in Christ, as we come upon the first week of Lent in this jubilee year of mercy and prayer, the Church offers us a fantastic challenge. As St. Matthew writes the words of Jesus and I quote, "Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you that you may be children of your Heavenly Father." And in the psalm, "Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord." No guesswork. Let's be perfect. And if we do these, we just might be, but now just, you're probably saying, "Oh, Fr. John, I know where you're going with this," but just before you change the channel, before you go away. Give us a chance to maybe, maybe to reconsider how God can work in your life.

Whatever it is you might be doing, the shortcomings in your life that these readings of 2,000 years ago could have effect on your life today as they have in my life every single day. Let's look at how you or all of us, how it can fit, how we can fit into God's life here on Earth and live in peace with others that's so badly needed. To live in peace with others. Wouldn't that be nice? Wouldn't that be ideal? A question. Do you live in fear? Or are you living a secret life that you are too ashamed of to tell anyone about? Secret. Meaning that it's only between you between you and the wall. Between you and the mirror. Oh, yeah. Between you and God. He knows it.

Also, are you doubting the existence of God? Especially with all the stuff that's going on in the world today and so many people ask me, "Father, how could there be a good God when He allows for these bad things to happen to good people?" And then also, you might be living a good Christian life. Going to church every Sunday, socializing with friends and once in a while offering an opinion about somebody you

don't like too much, like gossiping. Dear friends, let me assure you that God's unconditional love conquers everything that you have. Everything that's negative. Every God conquers every fear you have. Every sin, every selfish desire.

You see, I'm sure you know, but if you don't, I'll remind you. Did you know that God renews His love for each one of us every single day? It's like a rewind every 24 hours in our life. Yes, He does do that all the time. So, you see, it's up to you and me to accept His love. Even when we don't feel that we are worthy. "Oh, Father, I have so much to do. I have so much." Chill. Chill. Don't just look at yourself. Look at God's great love that He has for you. You need to open up to that love. You see, His love is totally open. His love is totally free for everyone. To get rid of that bad stuff you may have in your life. Such as, and these are things that are not very good. Like selfishness, greed, anger, hatred, jealousy and envy.

See, in Jesus' preaching of the law, He does something that's quite remarkable and unheard of. He transforms the old law, the old law of justice and mercy with grace and loving kindness. Another point. Did you know that God is good to the unjust and to the just? The same. We all have different ways of looking at it, but God is good to every single person. Now, you might say that the unjust don't deserve God's love. See, God embraces everyone. Sinner and saint. It's the sinner who chooses not to love God for whatever reason that might be. God seeks the highest good for you and me because He knows it's within each one of us to have that special good for others in relationship to God through other people on Earth.

So far, I thank you for staying tuned just, just a little more. Just a little bit more. In short, are you trying to live life just a little bit better? Do you really want to change your life? Now really? Seriously? Do you? Do you want to be more Christ-like? The one who created you? To be focused, to be good. I suggest that you build up if you can. Yes, you can. You can build up some courage and go to the sacrament of confession. The sacrament of reconciliation. Get rid of all that stuff that gets between you and the love of Christ. You see, why do I say this? Because you deserve the best that God has to give. You are worth it. You are created by Him, You deserve it. Give it, give it a try.

And let me close off with a special prayer that probably I'm sure is in the bottom of your screen. I will say it slow and hopefully repeat it again. And the prayer is.

Lord Jesus, Your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and set my heart ablaze with Your love that nothing make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make it bitter towards anyone. Amen.

Let me repeat it. We have a couple more seconds. Lord Jesus, if you can. Please say it out loud with me. Lord Jesus, Your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and set me, set my heart ablaze with Your love that nothing may make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make me bitter towards anyone. And as you say "Amen", you'll say, "Yes, Amen. I can do it." Why? Because God loves you, God trusts you and wants the very best. May God bless you.