



love your neighbour

Mark 12:31

## Gathering Prayer

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As we gather here in the embrace of your safety  
We thank you for fellowship and family.

We ask that you will strengthen us,  
restore us and inspire us.  
Let us love others  
as you so openly do.  
Lord, fill us with your peace.

*Amen.*

*(An opening prayer.  
Adapted from [www.lords-prayer-words.com](http://www.lords-prayer-words.com))*



## Introduction

# Who is my Neighbour?

**JUST LOVE** is love without borders, which overcomes obstacles because it is right and fair. These obstacles can be physical, mental, emotional, political, economic or religious.

**JUST LOVE** is unconditional love, loving without questioning or doubting.

Let us take a moment to remember Nelson Mandela, a man who spent his life fighting for the oppressed. Nelson began his campaign for a just world around 1944 and remained a public figure for equality and justice until his death on 5 December 1913. He was faced with challenges, arrests and imprisonment. Throughout this time of conflict he remained strong, true to his convictions. His love for humankind and equality did not waver. The inspiring attribute about Nelson is that he did not harbor any hatred or resentment towards his oppressors, even after he served his prison sentence in a system founded on racial intolerance. He seemed to mirror

Christ's unwavering love for all, '*Agape*'. Nelson saw it was imperative to love others as you would love yourself. He embodies 'JUST LOVE'.

*"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."*

*- Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom*

### Reflection:

- Q:** What do you 'do' with conviction?
- Q:** Can you find God in your convictions?
- Q:** What does the idea of JUST LOVE mean to you?

*"Who is my neighbour?"* Luke 10:29

**C**hrist showed us a love that transcended all borders. The Gospels reveal his unwavering compassion for all those who suffer, his powerful listening presence and his joy of being with people. Jesus lived 'agape' - the Greek word for unconditional, self-sacrificing love. He shared his life and teachings with all: men, women, children, sinners, the sick and the outcast. He intrinsically loved without questioning.

He asks us to do the same



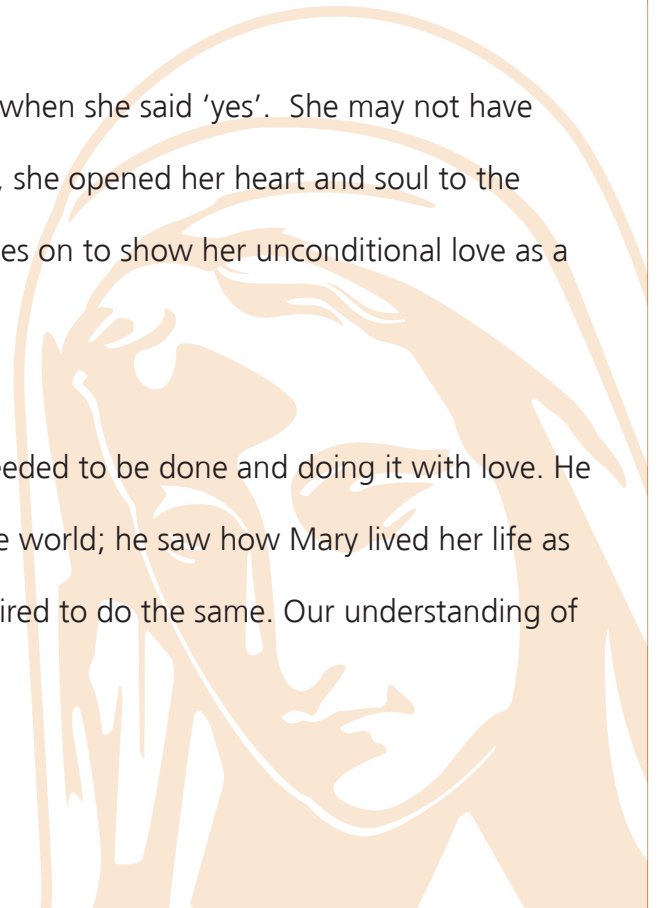
*Unconditional, self-sacrificing love*  
Meaning from [christianity.about.com](http://christianity.about.com)

*"... You shall love your neighbour as yourself."*

Mark 12:31

Mary gave of herself, unconditionally to God's will when she said 'yes'. She may not have fully understood what was being asked of her; still, she opened her heart and soul to the Spirit and demonstrated her love for God. Mary goes on to show her unconditional love as a mother, disciple and evangelizer.

Marcellin Champagnat lived his life seeing what needed to be done and doing it with love. He understood Jesus' ministry and connection with the world; he saw how Mary lived her life as the perfect disciple, the 'Good Mother' and he desired to do the same. Our understanding of 'Just Love' comes from Marcellin's own example.



# Scripture

Luke 10: 12 – 16

## Scripture

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind: and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer, do this and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down to Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down the road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So, likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him, and when he saw him he was moved by pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

### *The Word of the Lord*

### *Thanks be to God*



### **Reflection:**

- Q:** Who do we include when we think about loving our neighbors?
- Q:** What obstacles do we face when we think about doing this?
- Q:** How can we overcome our 'humanness' and just love?

*"make every effort to support your faith with goodness." (2 Peter 1:5)*

# Input

## Input

*"Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love"* Mother Teresa.

In our scripture passage we learn about what it means to love without borders. Jesus tells us that we must look beyond what is socially acceptable when loving others. He makes us aware that by truly loving others, we need to reach out beyond our friends, families, and work colleagues and be open to give love, because it is right. The concept of agape: loving with no expectations, is what being Christ-like is all about. Embracing '**Agape**', Just Love is a life long challenge for all Christians.



8. Marcellin was (also) deeply aware of the love of Jesus and Mary for others, This inspired in him the passion of an apostle. He dedicated his life to sharing this love.  
*(Water from the Rock)*
127. The cries of the world, especially those of the poor people, touch the heart of God and ours as well. The depth of God's compassion challenges us to be men and women whose hearts have no bounds since '*..in his infinite love, God continues to be totally involved with all men and women and today's world, with its disappointments and hopes.*'  
*(Water from the Rock)*
132. Confirmed by her own vocation by the invitation of the Spirit, Mary feels compelled to leave her own house to enter the house of another. She indicates for us the direction of mission – that we are to meet others where they are.  
*(Water from the Rock)*

# Group Reflection

- Q:** What do you overlook because it seems too hard?
- Q:** 'I wish there were more hours in the day....' Why is it hard to create time for what matters?
- Q:** How can we practically and realistically live the message behind the Good Samaritan and Marcellin's teachings?
- Q:** In our Marist community, where can we draw strength and support, when it is hard to love others?
- Q:** What is Christ asking you to do today?



*Photos courtesy of Marist Solidarity.  
Photographer Ashley Bulgarelli.*

# Personal Prayer and Commitment

## *Personal Prayer and Commitment*

*Dear God,*

*Make your love known to us.*

*Stir our hearts,*

*give us the ambition to love beyond our limitations:*

*We love, because it's God's will.*

*We love, because it is, Jesus' way.*

*We love, because Mary said 'yes.'*

*We love, because it was Marcellin's vocation.*

*We love, because it is right.*

*Amen.*

### **In *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) Pope Francis exhorts the faithful—**

to respond to the Gospel, to live it more fully and more deeply, to reach out to the poor and broken, to end injustice, to build peace.

- 37.** *Works of love directed to one's neighbour are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit....*
- 48.** *We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.*



# Closing Prayer:

## *Closing Prayer*

### All:

O God, I pray for myself and those dear to me,  
that we may be filled with the gift of love.  
Please put within us a spirit of kindness,  
so that we will have a want to be good.  
Then having received this gift,  
I pray you will give me an expectant readiness to  
perform just and right actions for others.  
I depend on you and thank you for your love,  
that you so unselfishly give to me.

*Amen.*

St Marcellin Champagant:

***Pray for us***

Mary our Good Mother:

***Pray for us***

And let us always remember:

***To pray for one another***

