

In love we do not judge

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From Laurence Freeman OSB, “Forgiveness and Compassion,” ASPECTS OF LOVE (London: Arthur James, 1997), pp. 72-74.

The only way to deal with the complexity of human relations is the simplicity of love. In love we do not judge, we do not compete; we accept, we revere, and we learn compassion. In learning to love others we release the inner joy of being that radiates outwards through us, touching others through our relationships. This is why communities, families, and marriages do not exist solely for the perfection of the people in those . . . relationships. They exist also to radiate love. . . . beyond themselves, radiating joy, that simplicity of love beyond themselves, to touch all those who come into contact with it.

It was John Main’s vision of human community, that community is made possible by the commitment we each make in solitude to the most profound relationship of our lives, which is our relationship with God. This is why in learning to love others we come to a new insight into the unity of creation and into the basic simplicity of life. We see what it means to say that love covers a multitude of sins. Forgiveness is the most revolutionary and transforming power of which we are capable. It teaches us that love is the essential dynamic of every relationship, the most intimate, the most antagonistic as well as the most casual. It’s the very ordinariness of our daily meditation that reveals to us how universal is the way of love.

After meditation: from Thomas Merton, THE WISDOM OF THE DESERT: SOME SAYINGS OF THE DESERT FATHERS (Boston: Shambhala, 1994), pp. 66-67.

A brother in Scete happened to commit a fault, and the elders assembled, and sent for Abbot Moses to join them. He, however, did not want to come. The priest sent him a message, saying: Come, the community of the brethren is waiting for you. So he arose and started off. And taking with him a very old basket full of holes, he filled it with sand, and carried it behind him. The elders came out to meet him and said, What is this, Father? The elder replied: My sins are running out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I come to judge the sins of another! They, hearing this, said nothing to the brother but pardoned him.