

Dear Padre,

There are so many preachers urging us to “reform our lives.” Most of this preaching centers on asking forgiveness for personal sins. Isn’t there more involved?

Consider that the reform more Christians should be focusing on is the social reform that fosters equality among human beings.

A central conviction of all Jesus’ followers is that every person of whatever race, gender, class, nationality, or any other distinction is fundamentally equal in dignity to every other person. That is why we vigorously support the unborn, the disabled, the mentally challenged, the poor, and the elderly. Every



human is a creation of God, created in God’s image. No one is better or more worthy than another.

This was certainly a key conviction of the Second Vatican Council: “With respect to the fundamental rights of human persons, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s intent” (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World [*Gaudium et Spes*], 29).

If you wish to truly reform yourself, make a commitment to overcome discrimination on all levels, which is so obvious in our country’s division between rich and poor. Get involved with social causes that help the poor, the unborn, the oppressed, and the elderly. Become a beacon of hope this new year.

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Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM Pope Francis

The great biblical tradition enjoins on all peoples the duty to hear the voice of the poor. It bids us break the bonds of injustice and oppression which give rise to glaring, and indeed scandalous, social inequalities. Reforming the social structures which perpetuate poverty and the exclusion of the poor first requires a conversion of mind and heart.

JOURNEY TO THE PHILIPPINES, JANUARY 16, 2015



Our Parish Community

January 30, 2022

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Jer 1:4–5, 17–19

1 Cor 12:31–13:13 or 13:4–13

Lk 4:21–30



Love is patient, love is kind...
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4, 7

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways.

Paul’s praise of love from the second reading is a favorite passage for weddings where it acts as a set of promises the bridal couple make to each other. They seem to be saying: “This is the way I am going to act, because I love you. I promise to put you ahead of me.” And they genuinely mean it. They’re convinced the passion they feel, the concern they experience, will be all that’s needed to transcend any future difficulties they might face.

Soon, reality sets in and they realize that the list is really a strategy for scaling the heights of unselfishness or critically examining the conscience to reveals one’s failures. This is not to say that people do not genuinely love each other. They do. But we are all so human, and selfishness is a weakness to which we are all susceptible. Perhaps Paul should have written: “Love tries to be patient, love tries to be kind....”

In a way, it is precisely in the give-and-take that occurs between imperfect humans that all the wonderful characteristics listed by Paul are refined. Our impatience is worn away as we deal sympathetically with the disagreeable traits of our loved ones. We become humble when those who should encourage us fail to acknowledge accomplishments that might otherwise inflate our egos. These are the slights we endure because we love the other person. Actually, such humble endurance is evidence that love truly is patient and kind.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- * Go out of your way to show love to someone in your family.
- * Think of ways of being a bit more understanding of others.