



Be Inclusive

In all of history, there can be no better example of the rule to be inclusive than Jesus Christ. Jesus did not limit his ministry to the religious scholars, political leaders, or the well-to-do. In fact, he focused on those deemed as having little or no practical value: prostitutes, widows, and immigrants. He invited those that society chose to forget: lepers and tax collectors. And when it was time to select his inner circle, he did not select rabbis, judges, or scholars, but rather the fisherman, tax collector and revolutionary. He chose to present his teachings to those who were considered cast away, those not considered to be modern shakers and movers. As his apostles went into the world to evangelize and spread the good news of the Lord at his direction, they did not simply preach to the Jews. Instead, they specifically included Gentiles. When Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice and accepted his crucifixion, he did so not for a handful of select few, but for all humankind.

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

The notion of inclusiveness is fundamental to the Catholic Church and its goal of evangelization. Civility requires the same inclusive nature. A civil society needs to include all of its various members in the discussion. Such an invitation accepts the importance of each opinion and recognizes that society cannot progress without input from all factions: Muslims and Jews, black and white, rich and poor, Republican and Democrat. Jesus saw inclusiveness as the way to spread his word to the world. Inclusiveness is a fundamental way for civility to spread as well.

As the song says, "All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place."

Credit: Oshkosh Civility Project

Visit the Door County Civility Project for more information: <http://www.doorcountycivilityproject.org>



Keys to Civility - Accept Others

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer." -Psalm 19:14

Because It Matters:

Even on our best days, when everything is going just right, it often doesn't take much to alienate us from others. We can find ourselves reaching for unkind words and being hurtful to those we feel have insulted or mistreated us - or who may simply dislike us. In his study guide "Your Best Life Now," Joel Osteen poses an interesting question and thought: "Are you good to people?"

This question is easy as long as you picture your friends and allies as the recipients of your kindness and generosity. But things get uncomfortable when we are actually called to love our enemies.

At times like these, we need to focus our attention away from ourselves, away from our situation.

Can we find the power to overcome these challenges and seek ways to accept others? When we do, we can find greater acceptance within our own lives, in our interactions where we work and play, and we make our community a better place for all.

Applying it to my life:

1. Think of a time when you felt persecuted and hurt by the words or actions of someone. How did you feel? What did you do? Is there anything you would have liked to have done in a different way?
2. Romans 12:14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them." How can we seek to be more accepting of those who do things contrary to what we like? How can we seek to respond more positively to those who are hurtful to us?
3. Romans 12:17: "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all." How does this passage help us to be more accepting of others?

Credit: *Because it Matters - Bringing Back Civility* - Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

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