

## Learning Jesus

### A Lenten reflection: Week 6

**Seek first God's reign and God's justice and all these things will be given you besides.**

Matthew 6:33

"What you fall in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything." (Pedro Arrupe)  
Jesus offers us a controlling or defining vision, a vision that will meet our deepest fears and nurture our grandest hopes. Jesus as God's dream holds out for us a way of reading reality - in such a way that we find a purpose for living; freely and hopefully - and not just for ourselves, but for others too.

**Forgive and you will be forgiven.**

Luke 6:37

God's forgiveness, according to Jesus, isn't conditional. Julian would go so far as to say God doesn't forgive, for there never has been a time when God hasn't forgiven! Forgiveness just is. And it is premature. It doesn't wait. It doesn't calculate. It's not strategic. And once we've been grasped by this forgiveness - not the idea of it, but the lived experience of its reality - we will practise it. Forgiveness is for giving.

**Whatever you did for one of these least sisters or brothers of mine, you did for me.**

Matthew 25:40

What matters is our life for others. And not because we are told to, or from self regard - but from a vision which has captured us. And this vision is based on our experience of being forgiven and being loved ourselves. Thomas Merton describes the experience as a "hell of mercy", where we experience our nothingness in a spirit of repentance and surrender to God. It is out of this experience that we can act in love for all the little ones.

**I am the door; whoever goes in through me will be saved; he will go in and out and find pasture.**

John 10:9

Jesus is saying that we have lost our way. We do not know ourselves. We are not at home within ourselves. We have lost the ability to live. At best we are only half alive. Jesus wants us to experience again the rapture of being fully alive. He wants us to be without anxiety. He wants us to live interiorly free and outwardly fruitful. He wants us to go in and out secure enough in ourselves to give ourselves away.

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**...do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.**

Luke 12:22

Our experience of life is the arena for our experience of God, and calls us not to escape from life but to embrace it more fully. This is not magic, but very real, and we can say with Henri Nouwen, "I am resting while feeling restless, at peace while tempted, safe while still anxious, surrounded by a cloud of light while still in darkness, in love while still doubting. "