

# LEARNING JESUS

*Just as he is gentle and humble, so we can come with teachable hearts. Taking on his "easy yoke" and "light burden" suggests that God is not at our disposal. When we stop trying to be in control, notice our condition and have the courage to live and pray out of that place something happens. We discover and **learn** that life is all gift and, even in the experience of poverty or being burdened, find freedom for service and ministry.*

**Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons and daughters of God.**

Matthew 5:44

The implications of being loved by God are social: we are all beloved in God. Communion - the vision of who we are together in God - thrives on otherness and difference. In fact the real test of faith lies in our capacity for difference. Fear breeds fear; violence breeds violence; love shuns violence and casts out fear.

**Go and learn the meaning of the words, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice".**

Matthew 9:13

"Recall the face of the poorest and most helpless man whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny?" (Gandhi) Matthew's theology holds that love of our neighbour is the true fulfilment of the Law. It is the only law: the law of love and mercy.

**If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.**

Matthew 16:24,25

Following Jesus means embracing the reality of our existence, and living out of our truth. This will always mean a recognition of our false self - our fearful ability to make something of ourselves and a surrendering into the nothingness or poverty of our condition. Paradoxically, this becomes a place fertile with the Spirit. "In order to become myself, I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be, and in order to find myself I must go out of myself, and in order to live I have to die." (Thomas Merton)