

What do we think perfection is? How, as human beings, can we be perfect? I think most of us would say that we're not perfect and never will be – not in this life, anyway.

I suppose we think of spiritual perfection in terms of 'sinless', or being without fault or flaw, or being saintly, or praying all day and never having a cynical, cruel, jealous or dirty thought in our lives. Well, we can safely say that's not going to happen. Fortunately for us, none of that is what perfection means.

Perfection comes from the Latin 'perfectus', which means 'complete, entire and whole.' Perfection means lacking nothing, including everything.

That's God, of course. For God it means including everything and everyone; for us it means *excluding* nothing and no one. If we exclude someone from our kindness, then our kindness is not perfect because it is not complete – there is something – someone – missing from it.

When Jesus tells us to be perfect, just as God our Father in heaven is perfect, he also tells us what perfection means: treating everyone equally, regardless of who they are. Not being sinless, not praying all day, not being without fault or flaw - but treating everyone equally. Excluding no one makes us whole and complete – we reflect the divine perfection. If we exclude someone from our love, then our love is imperfect because it is not complete.

If this has anything to do with the way we feel, it would be impossible; but the Lord does not command the impossible – which is why he told us to *love* our brothers and sisters, not to *like* them.

And this is why he told us to treat everyone equally – not pretend everyone is wonderful. Because treating everyone equally is an act of will, not a matter of feelings. We must let our sun rise on the good and the bad, the nice and the not nice, alike. We must let our rain fall on friend and foe equally. The Lord tells us that this is what perfection means.