

## Be Perfect

**W**ow, that's a tall order! But what does *perfect* mean? The Greek word means "full" or "complete." In the first reading, Leviticus calls us to be *holy*, a word with cultic allusions—to be set apart to be used for God. Though not possessing exactly the same sense, there is a connection between *perfect* and *holy*, for to be set apart to be used for God will certainly make us perfect, fulfilled, and complete. So what does Jesus mean when he tells us to be perfect, as God is perfect?

Continuing our reflection on the Sermon on the Mount, we find Jesus telling us how we are to be perfect as God is perfect. He offers two examples of extraordinary behavior. The Mesopotamian code of Hammurabi states "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The punishment may not exceed the crime.

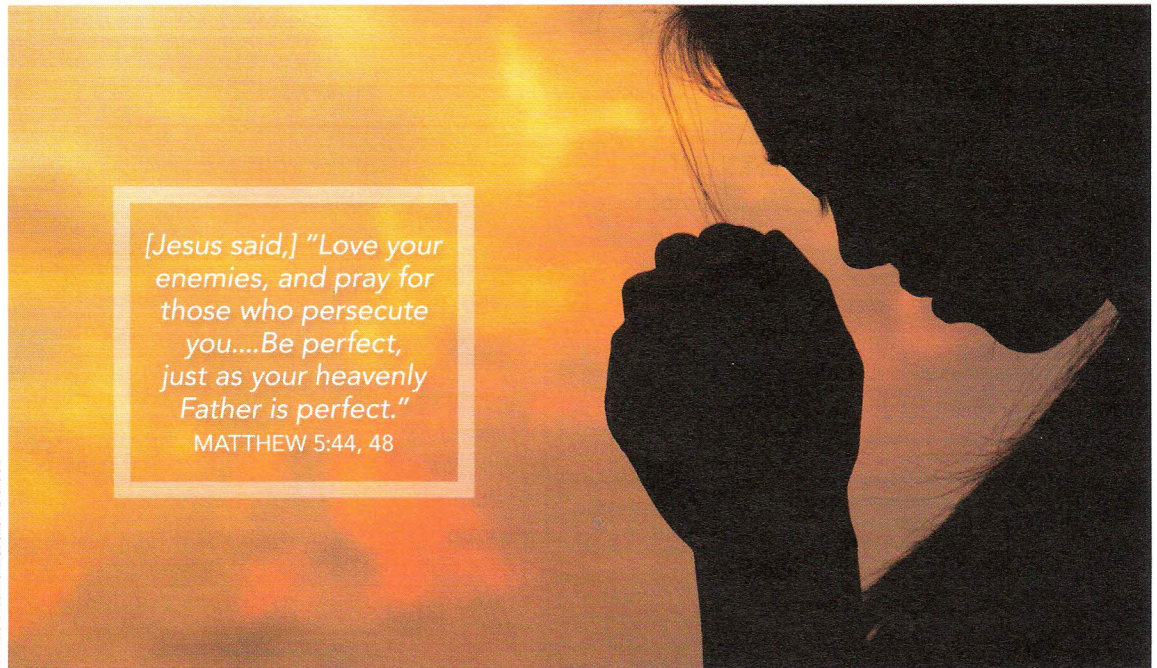
This was a step forward in ancient justice.

Jesus said that this is not enough. There is to be no vindictiveness, no revenge, regardless of how equivalent it might appear. The reason for this is that God loves and cares for all, even those who do us injustice. God makes the "sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:46). In this way, we must be like God; we must love all, no exceptions. This is what it means to be perfect. It is indeed a tall order. But it is the way to be fulfilled, to be complete.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR Reflection

- ✦ *Where in your life are you being called to consecrate yourself to God and God's work?*
- ✦ *Where in your life are you being challenged to love more unselfishly?*



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