

## May

**“Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your lap.”(Lk 6:38).**

Has it ever happened that you received a gift from a friend and then felt you had to reciprocate — not so much because you felt obliged to pay the person back, but simply out of love and gratitude? I’m sure it has.

If you feel this way, imagine how God must feel, God who is love. God reciprocates every gift that we give to any neighbor in his name. True Christians experience this frequently. And each time it is a surprise. We can never get used to the inventiveness of God.

I could give you a thousand examples of this. I could even write a book on this subject alone, and you would see how true are the words, **“A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your lap.”** God always reciprocates with generosity.

Here is one example. Night had fallen in Rome. In their basement apartment, a small group of young women who wanted to live the Gospel were wishing each other good night. Then the doorbell rang. Who could it be at this hour? At the door they found a panic-stricken young father. He was desperate: the following day he and his family were going to be evicted because they had been unable to pay their rent.

The women looked at one another and then, in silent agreement, went to the dresser drawer. There they kept what was left of their salaries. In envelopes marked “gas,” “electricity” and “telephone” was the money they had set aside for these bills. Without a moment’s worry about what would happen to them, they gave all the money to their visitor. That night they went to bed very happy. They knew someone else would take care of them.

Just before dawn the phone rang. It was the same man. “I’ve called a taxi, and I’m coming right over!” Amazed that he should have chosen to come by taxi, they awaited his arrival. As soon as they saw his face they knew something had changed. “Last night, as soon as I got home,” he said. “I found I had received an inheritance I never dreamed I would get. My heart told me I should give half of it to you.” The amount he gave them was exactly twice what they had generously given him.

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Haven’t you also experienced this? If not, remember that the gift must be given with no self-interest, without hoping to get it back, and to whoever asks for it.

Try it, not so that you can see if it works, but because you love God.

You might be tempted to say, "I have nothing to give." That's not true. If we want to, each of us can discover that we possess inexhaustible treasures: our free time, our love, our smile, our advice, our peace, our words that might persuade someone who has to give to someone who has not.

You might also say, "I don't know whom to give to." Just look around you: don't you remember that sick person in the hospital, that widow who always feels lonely, that boy in your class who failed and got discouraged, the young man who is sad because he can't find a job, your little sister or brother who needs a helping hand, that friend who is in prison, that new person at work who is unsure of herself? In each person, Christ is waiting for you.

Put on the new style of behavior that comes from the Gospel and is the garment of a Christian. It is the exact opposite of having a closed mind or being concerned only about ourselves. Stop putting your trust in this world's goods, and start relying on God. This will show your faith in him, and you will see from the gifts you receive that your faith is well founded.

It becomes apparent, however, that God does not give as he does in order to make us rich. He acts in this way so that many, many others, seeing the little miracles that happen to us as a result of our giving, may decide to do the same.

God also gives to us because the more we have the more we can give. He wants us to be administrators of his goods and see to it that they are distributed throughout the community around us, so that others might be able to repeat what was said of the first Christian community, "There was not a needy person among them" (Acts 4:34).

Don't you think that in this way you too can help give a solid spiritual foundation to the social change that the world is waiting for?

**"Give and it will be given to you."**

When Jesus said these words, undoubtedly he was thinking first and foremost of the reward we will receive in heaven. But the reward we receive on this earth gives us already a foretaste and a guarantee of our heavenly reward.

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