

## Praying for your Enemy

We are all hopefully in the good habit of praying for our family and friends – maybe even every day, but especially during times of crisis or need. Lately, there has been a lot of talk about praying for those on the “front line” during the COVID pandemic and now during the current unrest in our state. But how many times have you stopped to pray for those with whom you do not agree? Have you stopped and taken time to pray for those who are making very tough decisions about what will be allowed to reopen and when, whether these are government leaders – or bishops or pastors – especially when you do not like their decisions? Have you taken time to pray for those who caused trouble in our cities recently, even if you are angry about their actions? “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for He makes His sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.” (Matthew 5:43-45). The Catechism of the Catholic Church talks about the “prayer of intercession” – praying on the behalf of another (CCC 2634-2636). This prayer “knows no boundaries and extends to one’s enemies” (CCC 2647). God Himself has asked us to pray for our “enemies” – and this includes those who make rules with which we disagree, those who are part of division within our cities, and yes, even your annoying co-worker. We need always remember that the “other” is also a beloved child of God. While praying for one’s enemies may not be easy to do, our intercessory prayer is powerful; the good effects of those prayers may only be made known to us in heaven. “Pray for the one who hurts me...Yes...because it changes lives” (Pope Francis, February 19, 2017).