

OUR DUTY TO GIVE HONOR, RESPECT AND
APPRECIATION TO EVERYONE

(Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan)

The deepest craving in man is the craving for honor, respect and appreciation. As children of God, we deserve to have them. Respecting others will lead them world to a better understanding of love and cooperation. The lack of respect will lead us to enmity and degradation. Let us therefore try to understand the value of humility leading us to respect.

Again and again, St. Paul speaks about respect, “Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive inheritance as your reward,” (Col. 3:23). “In humility count others as better than yourselves” (Phil 2:3). “Love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another, in showing honor,” (Rom 12:10).

We have to respect people with less talent also, as they are God’s children. It is not due to their fault that they do not have great talents. It is God who gives various talents so that all could work together for the common good.

We have to respect everyone, as that will make them love and respect us in return. It is our duty to honor, respect and appreciate others, as that will give more hope and courage. On the other hand; if proper honor, respect and appreciation are not given, people may become disappointed and they may fail.

Let us see the example of Jesus Christ. He gave honor and respect to John the Baptist by receiving baptism from him. He appreciated the loyalty of His disciples saying, “You are those who have continued with me in my trials,” (St. Lk. 23:20). He gave the highest possible honor to the disciples by washing their feet. He gave the commission to peter to tend the lambs and sheep, as the representative of the apostolic band, after Peter’s denial.

There is a story of a monastery which attracted newcomers through their changed behavior. There was a time when new comers were not joining the monastery. They did not know how to solve the problem. Then someone told the Father Superior of the monastery that one of them was Christ. They were five in number. They tried to find out who was Christ, so that they could respect him accordingly. They examined the virtues of everyone. But they found it difficult to find who can be the first. Then they decided that everyone should respect all others, as if Christ was in him in a special way. Another thought that came to them was, that there was the possibility that each one would be Christ. Hence everyone had the duty to behave as Christ. These two thoughts were combined and each one began to treat others as if the other person was Christ, and each began to behave as Christ. The change in the monastery was so remarkable that the visitors were wonderstruck. As a result, people began to join the monastery, as the best place for a godly life.

Let me speak about my personal experience. When I was a student of the Osmania University, we went for plant collection in the Adilabad forest. After the plant collection, all the staff and students went into a cafeteria. Since I was not in the habit of drinking coffee or tea, I remained in the bus. Dr. Abdul Saleem, the head of the Botany Department, finding that I was not with them and understanding that I was not in the habit of drinking coffee or tea, bought a packet of eatables and brought it to me. See the extraordinary respect that the professor had for a student.

The question then arises, why some people refuse to respect others. May be that they think that if others are exalted, those who respect and praise others may be held in a low position, but the real truth is just the opposite. When we speak good things of people, then will be more inclined to speak good things about us.

Just imagine everyone trying to respect others. Then there will be peace, love and progress. Enemies will become friends. When there is mutual respect among religions, countries, families, and members of the families that will make this world a heaven. What a tragedy that even some of the educated and enlightened people don't understand this.