

THE MAN OF OPEN, HANDS.

Adaptation of a parable of Vicente Marques, sj. By P.Ribes, s.j.

Intent of the Parable

- *We are born with closed hands and clenched fists. We are selfish and self centered*
- *To be aware that selfishness is the cause of unhappiness and loneliness*
- *To enjoy happiness, friendship and intimacy we need to open our hands.*
- *Jesus is the man of open hands and outstretched arms reaching out to all in love.*
- *Selfish men crucified Jesus, . His teachings were unbearable to them,*

The Story

Once upon a time, lost in the skies, there was a planet. It was a wonderful earth, covered with trees and decked with flowers, with wonderful dawns and sunsets and enchanting landscapes. Though it was a rich and beautiful earth, the people therein were very sad. It was a planet of “clenched fists”. Every child there was born and remained for life with clenched fists.

People in that little earthly paradise were not able to help each other, nor give or receive from one another. No one was able to help or care for others. There was no friendliness, no intimacy. Shaking hands, caressing and fondling were never done. Everybody lived a lonely and unhappy life. Indeed, to live in that place was gloomy and depressing.

One day, however, something extraordinary happened over there. A man of unclenched fists, of open hands and of outstretched arms appeared. No one knew his name, or where he had come from! He went about talking and smiling at one and all, and sharing all he had with anyone in need. He began telling them something unheard of before: ***“Open your hands, unclench your fists, stretch out your arms, reach out to others, embrace one another, it’s time for you to love one and all”***

The children of the planet of the “Clenched Fists” were the first to listen to that stranger. At the start they found it painful to open their hands, but as the days went by, it was not only easy but also enjoyable to move about with open hands.

In the passing of time, some childlike grown ups followed the example of the children. Slowly their hands loosened, now, they felt free to meet their fellow humans, touch them, caress them, to give and to receive, to help and be helped. They were able to experience the joys and blessedness of tenderness, friendliness, love and intimacy

Yet, many grown ups objected to the teachings of that man of open hands, and of outstretched arms. They hated and persecuted him and his followers.

One day, , in a rage, they seized the man of open hands, and of outstretched arms and in hatred yelled at him: **“You insist going about with your hands open and your arms outstretched.; very well then, we shall see to it that your hands remain open and your arms outstretched forever”**.

Then , they nailed him to a cross where he remains until today with his hands wide open and his arms outstretched, teaching us how to love, help and forgive one another!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What do the closed hands and “clenched fists” signify in the parable?
2. Can people moving about with “clenched fists” be happy?
3. What do you think of our planet earth: Is it a planet of “clenched fists” or a planet of “open hands”? Why?
4. Why all the things “worth living” such as joy, peace, friendship, love, intimacy, union, sharing etc. cannot exist in a world of closed hands and ”clenched fists”?
5. What makes people clench their fists? And what makes them open them?
6. In the parable, who is signified by the man of open hands and outstretched arms? Mention his name and some of his teachings.
7. Why the first to listen to the man of open hands were the children?
8. What sort of people were those who after the children followed the man of open hands?
9. Who did and why crucify the “he man of open hands”?
10. Is it easy or hard to go through life with open hands and outstretched arms to reach out to others in love? Why?
11. What do your think : *Is our planet Earth a planet of closed or open hands?*
12. Mention the names of some people that on our earth went through life with open hands and outstretched arms. ?
13. Are you mostly, a person of open or of closed hands?
14. How can we help people who are going through life with “closed hands”?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

- Clasped hands cannot give or receive
- Gilded hands are cold and stiff.
- Give and you will receive.
- Give until you feel the pinch
- Jesus’ hands are for ever open to forgive
- Love and affection cannot be grabbed, only received.
- Open hands are a sign of friendship clenched fists, of enmity
- Open your heart, your hands will follow
- Shake hands with your heart
- Share of what you have and of what you are, because the gift without the giver is bear
- Tell me how much you give, I’ll tell you how much you love.
- The hands are an extension of the heart
- The wide open crucified hands of Christ tell us: that much I loved you.

BIBLE TEXTS OF GENEROSITY AND GIVING.

Mt. 12/37-39	The Greatest Commandment
Mt. 15/31-46	Parable of the Last Judgment
Jan 13/34-35	The New Commandment
Ja 2/1-7	Warning against prejudice.
Ja. 2/14-19	Faith in actions
Ja. 5/1-6	Warning against the Rich
1 Jn 2/7-14	The New Commandment
1 Jn 3/1-10	Children of God
1 Jn 3/11-18	Love one another
Jn 13/1-17	Washing of the feet
Jn 15/11-17	Love one another
Acts 2/43-47	Life among the Believers
Acts 4/32-35	All things in common
1 Co 13/1-13	Description of love
Ja 4/11-12	Warning against judging our brothers
Mt 5/21-24	Reconciliation with enemies
Mt. 5/18-42	Against revenge
Mt 5/43-48	Love for enemies
Mt 18/21-35	Parable of the unforgiving servant