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The Playwright, George Bernard Shaw sent Sir Winston Churchill a caustic invitation, reading: - "Am reserving two tickets for you for my premiere. Come and bring a friend - if you have one." Churchill replied: "Impossible to be present for the first performance - Will attend second - if there is one." That's what you call getting your own back in a sort of polite way.

In the book of Exodus the law allowed 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. Jesus then steps on to the scene and says we must love even our enemies which up to then was unheard of. It was revolutionary then and it revolutionary now.

But our love of others has to be deep down and not just on the surface. If we've fallen out with anyone we may bury the hatchet but do we mark the spot? Jesus says that we must forgive others from the heart.

The Northern Ireland conflict, for instance, resulted in the building of walls and barricades between people – structures which are still there. The problem may be contained but not truly resolved at a heart level. When Israel built that great high wall separating themselves from the Palestinians, the late Holy Father, 'blessed John Paul 11', said that they should have been building bridges, not walls. Pope Francis also emphasized this.

But then, again maybe there is a bit of latent anger in all of us which could easily be triggered when our 'cage is rattled' and sense of security is threatened. This is where our love is tested.

But on the other side of the coin we gain no credits either if our love for others is doled out in the exact same measure in which we hope to receive it.

Jesus says: 'If you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit – even the pagans do as much". The badge of true Christianity is when we look beyond our clan or

class - beyond those people with whom we feel comfortable, beyond our comfort zone and associate with those who are not part of our inner circle. This doesn't just apply to better-off people but also to people who live in, what they refer to these days as, 'sink estates' and especially people caught up in a gangland culture. By boxing ourselves in, whatever our social setting, our ability to love like Jesus becomes curtailed.

Jesus associated with different social elements of his day. The disenfranchised might have included – the beggars, the lepers, the Samaritans, the prostitutes. When they engaged with Him, like the Samaritan woman, for instance, he enabled them to break the mold in which society had cast them. But he also associated with the better off – people like the rich tax gatherer, Zacchaeus and Nicodemus, the Pharisee who owned property and, of course the rich young man. When they sought his help and council, they too were able to move beyond their peers insular way of thinking and acting. Where do we stand in all of this?

Jesus 'broke the existing social mold' and in His efforts to be inclusive of everyone, was Himself rejected and nailed to a Cross. In so doing, as the Scriptures tell us, "he would draw all peoples to Himself", with no one left out, only those who excluded themselves.

At Mass we come to Calvary where the Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts – a love which is not confined, but open to all and sundry.