

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

- My Christians, how are you doing here? Have you got love for each other? If you want to be saved, do not ask for anything else here, in the world, but love. Is there any of you who has got this kind of love towards his brothers? Let him rise and tell me so that I may wish him well and make all Christians forgive him. He will receive such forgiveness which he would have been unable to find had he given thousands of pounds of gold.
- Holy man of God, I love God and my brothers.
- Good, my child. You have got my blessing. What is your name?
- Costas.
- What do you do for a living?
- I am a shepherd.
- Do you weigh the cheese which you sell?
- I do.
- You, my child, have learnt to weigh cheese and I have learnt to weigh love. Is the scales ashamed of its master?
- No.
- Let me then weigh your love now and, if it is right and not false, then I shall wish you well and I shall make all Christians forgive you. How can I know, my child, that you love your brothers? Now that I am here and walk and teach the people, I say that I love Mr Costas like my eyes, but you do not believe me. You want to try me first and then believe me. I have bread to eat, you have not. If I give a piece of it to you, who have not, I show that I love you. But if I eat the whole loaf and you are hungry, then what do I show? I show that the love that I feel for you is false. I have got two cups of wine to drink, you have not. If I give you some of it to drink, then I show that I love you. But if I do not give you, my love is false. You are sad. Your mother or father has died. If I come to console you then my love is true. But if you are crying and weeping and I am eating, drinking and dancing, my love is false. Do you love that poor child?
- I do.
- If you loved him, you would buy him a shirt because he is naked so that he would also pray for your soul. Then your love would be true. But now it is false. Is not it so, my Christians? We cannot go to paradise with false love. Now, since you want to make your love gold, take and dress the poor children and then I shall make them forgive you. Will you do this?
- I will.
- My Christians, Costas understood that the love which he had till now was false and wants to make it gold, to dress the poor children. Because we have edified him I beg you to tell three times for Mr Costas, may God forgive and have mercy on him.
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From the teachings of St. Cosmas of Aetolia



