

Diakonia in Biblical Writings and Fathers of the Church

Mt. 25: 31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

Jn. 15: 9-17

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.

Ac. 2: 41-47

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Gal. 5: 1-6

For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. It is I, Paul, who am telling you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I declare to every man who has himself circumcised that he is bound to observe the entire law. You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For through the

Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Eph. 4: 22-32

... that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth. Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil. The thief must no longer steal, but rather labor, doing honest work with his (own) hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need. No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. (And) be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

James 2: 14-26

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works. You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble. Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God." See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

I Pet. 1: 13-25

Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, ²live soberly, and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your

conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy." Now if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth for sincere mutual love, love one another intensely from a (pure) heart. You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God, for: "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers, and the flower wilts; but the word of the Lord remains forever." This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

I Pet. 4: 7-11

The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be serious and sober for prayers. Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Jn. 3: 11-24

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another, unlike Cain who belonged to the evil one and slaughtered his brother. Why did he slaughter him? Because his own works were evil, and those of his brother righteous. Do not be amazed, (then,) brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. (Now) this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if (our) hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep

his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.

1 Jn. 4: 7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

Writing of the Church Fathers

- Anyone who truly loves their neighbor will not fail to serve him as the most humble servant.
- St. John Chrysostom
- Many can give money to those in need; but to personally serve the needy, readily, out of love, and in a fraternal spirit – to do this requires a truly great soul.
- St. John Chrysostom
- Adorn your tongue with meekness, humility, make it worthy of God, who you address, bestow blessings, and great mercy – as through our words we can also be merciful.
- St. John Chrysostom
- Memory of our good works makes us negligent, and leads to arrogance. Do not think of your good deeds, so that God may remember them.
- St. John Chrysostom
- For in doing good actions, it is not those who receive the kindness that are benefited, so much as those who do it that make gain and profit, for it gives them confidence towards God.
- St. John Chrysostom:(Sermon 6: Commentary on Titus)
- Perform your service openly (honestly, uprightly), as though you were serving Christ Himself.
St. Basil the Great

- Do not allow others to do the work assigned to you, in order that the reward will be taken from you and given to another, that another will not receive recognition for your talent.

- *St. Basil the Great*

- Nothing else makes a person like God as do good deeds.

- *St. Gregory Theologian*

- When it is your turn to serve others, add to physical service, a word of consolation, manifest brotherly love those whom you serve. In that way your service will be gentle (pleasant - satisfying) as salted food.

- *St. Basil the Great*

- One gives alms in order that his fields will be blessed. Another gives alms in order that his ships be safe. Yet another give alms on account of his children, that God will save, and protect them. God does not reject anyone, but gives to everyone what they wish, if that does not harm their soul. But all of these have received their reward, and God does not owe them anything, since they did not ask anything of Him for the welfare of their souls. They desired nothing for their spiritual welfare. God grants you your reward, according to the way you act.

St. Abba Dorotheus

- One gives alms to be free of future suffering; giving alms, for the benefit of one's soul, giving it for God's sake. However, he does not act as God wishes, since he conducts himself as a servant. Others give alms to receive a reward, this is higher than the first, however he also does not act as God wishes, as he conducts himself as a hired worker, fulfilling the will of his master to receive a payment and profit. We should give alms for the sake of goodness, for the sake of sympathy for one another, ... and such is reasonable mercy, in this way we approach the stage of sonship.

St. Abba Dorotheus

- Anyone who wishes to do something, but is unable, is however before God, who sees our heart, is as one who has already done it.

St. Mark the ascetic

- Blessed is the one who does good for many, at the time of judgment, for he will find many to defend him.

St. Nilus of Siani

- It is good to help one's friends, better to help those in need, but best to help one's enemies. The first type are the publicans, and pagans, the second type are those living under God's law, and the third type are those who live their lives worthy of heaven.

St. Isidore

- If you wish to help someone, give secretly, and avoid arrogance.

St. Ephrem the Syrian