

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.*

*Matthew 7:12*



Today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew contains Jesus' famous moral formula, his "Golden Rule," which appears across many religions and moral philosophies throughout the world: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

In the centuries since Jesus uttered these words, many Christian teachers have reflected deeply on this teaching and have offered their own variations on this theme. My personal favorite comes from the fourth-century theologian Lactantius, who, in his *Divine*

*Institutes*, considered how Jesus' teaching touched on public life and justice. Knowing how deeply Roman society valued family, he restated Jesus' Golden Rule for his culture: "The whole nature of justice lies in our providing for others through humanity what we provide for our own families and relatives through affection." He asked Romans to provide for vulnerable families what they so freely provided for their own.

**Today's readings**

Psalm 138 | Esther (Apocrypha) 14:1–6, 12–14  
Matthew 7:7–12

*In many cultures, it is traditional to draw strict boundaries around who we consider family, yet God asks us to consider whether children across the globe are also, somehow, our children. What does it mean to "provide through humanity" for an expanded sense of family?*