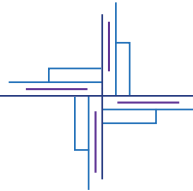


MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

Luke 6:35a



Nearly a year ago, my spouse and I visited the Eldridge Street Synagogue, a stunning place that was once a center of Jewish life on the Lower East Side of New York. After having fallen into disrepair, it was painstakingly restored, and today it is a museum rich in stories and artifacts from the community. Among the encased artifacts are two loan cards made to members of the synagogue in the 1920s. These cards record \$100 and \$25 loans issued and then repaid three weeks later at no interest. The word “paid” is scrawled in beautiful script over the first card.

Now, what on earth does this have to do with the Gospel reading today? This passage is one of my favorites because of a single line, an utterance so brief that it is rarely mentioned today. Quietly embedded within Jesus’ teaching on nonviolence and loving one’s enemy is what

some have called Jesus’ single most important economic teaching: “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.”

When I think about those loan cards from the Eldridge Street synagogue, I wonder about the people who needed those \$100- and \$25-dollar loans. Was an eviction imminent? Was it for relief in the wake of a fire? We don’t know much about the people who received those loans, but the fact that they were offered without interest tells us a lot about the compassion and care of the community that extended them. May we continue to use our financial resources to practice love and compassion in our communities.

Today’s readings

Psalm 79:1–9 | Daniel 9:3–10 | Luke 6:27–38

Why does Jesus talk about poverty so much? What does Jesus mean when he says that giving without interest is a way of loving others? What are the practical implications of this teaching?