

Trying to Judge Others No More
By John Chuchman

(a personal examination of conscience)

As I look back
on my past biases, prejudices, and behaviors,
I discovered that I had been ignoring
Jesus' urging to live in Love
to Judge Not.

I had been withholding Forgiveness of those who hurt me
as being all bad,
implying I was all good.

I judged those who did not attend church regularly
as being lost
without knowing the good lives they were leading.

I thought those of other Faiths
to be misguided,
without trying to see the truths in their religions.

I called those who cut me off driving
as rude,
when I oft did the very same thing.

I called those on welfare
lazy
without really understanding their plight.

I condemned women who aborted
as sinful,
without knowing of their rape, of their circumstances,
without doing anything to provide an alternative.

I thought gays and lesbians to be
intrinsically disordered
without challenging the misguided teachings of the church,
without understanding and without compassion,
and then I got to really know some.

I labeled thieves
as evil
without truly understanding their plight.
I believed all abusers
to be terrible people
without knowing of their own abuse.
I thought divorced people
simply did not try hard enough to make it work
without knowing of their challenges,
without understanding their incompatibility issues
and abuse.
I believed all divorced and remarried people
were living in sin
until I challenged the church's misguided teaching,
until I saw through the sham of the annulment process.
I labeled all alcoholics
despicable
without really understanding the disease.
I felt that those who wanted church to be
as it was when they were young
to be old fashioned
without understanding their insecurities
associated with change.
I thought those who would change church
as misguided
without realizing how badly reform of the church is needed.
I believed anyone who disagreed with me
was wrong
until I saw I was not always right.
I labeled gang members
as evil
without understanding their need to belong
to something.
I called teenagers
out of control

without understanding their lack of and need for
Love.

I named politicians
crooked

forgetting I had voted for them.

I believed Bishops to be
abusers of power

failing to recognize that we gave them that power.

I called abusive priests
criminals

without understanding the terrible impact
of forced celibacy.

I labeled proclaimed Saints
irrelevant in today's world

without understanding their humanity.

I called some neighbors
unfriendly

forgetting my own unfriendliness.

I thought people of different color skin
inferior

without getting to know them.

I called those who caused accidents
Reckless

until I had an accident or two.

I believed murderers
deserved to die

without seeing them as equal children of God.

I believed people different than me
were somehow less,

not seeing us all as equal in God's eyes.

I saw people less-blessed than I
as unfortunate

without understanding the true nature
of God's gifts.

I saw the aged

as a burden
without understanding their wisdom
and
until I became one myself.

I cried!

*I had not been living in Love at all.
God, please help me to Judge Not anymore.*