

Looking for the Good in Others

Reading from the Word:

Every person is the neighbor according to the quality of his good (*Doctrine of Charity* 73).

A person should be most friendly to what is good (*Arcana Coelestia* 4804).

People without charity think nothing else than evil of the neighbor and speak nothing but evil. If they say anything good it is for the sake of themselves or an outward show of friendship. But people with charity think nothing else than good of the neighbor and speak nothing but good, from the Lord thus at work within charity (*Arcana Coelestia* 1088:2).

It is not angelic to search for the evils with a person unless one also looks for what is good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 10381).

People who love the Lord observe what is good in another, and if they see anything evil and false, they excuse it, and if they can, try to amend it in him. But those who are selfish, see in the neighbor only what is evil. If they see anything good, they either perceive it as nothing or put a bad interpretation upon it (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1079).

Possible Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you know if someone is “friendly to what is good?”
2. Do you think people tend to look more for the good or more for the flaws in others?
3. If people act unkindly to you, is it hard to forgive them and look to the good in them? Why or why not?
4. If you felt that everyone at school was looking for the good in you, do you think you would feel more comfortable and happy in your life?
5. How highly do you value morality and honesty in a friend?
6. Would it improve your relationships if people (including yourself) could agree to look for the good in each other more?
7. All good is from the Lord, but what might be signs of good in yourself?