

**Item #79 (Love Invites Understanding)**

“Loving one’s enemy would seem to be an invitation to understanding one’s enemy”. These words are by the present writer and are a quotation from the previous Item. They are not, strictly speaking, a command of the Lord as registered in Scripture, but they are the present writer’s attempt to live out his Lord’s command of love. In order to understand Islam, an avowed enemy of Christians, I shall make use of quotations from the book of a deceased friend of mine, Fr. James V. Schall, S.J. The book is entitled *On Islam. A Chronological Record, 2002-2018*, and was published by Ignatius Press in San Francisco in 2018. It has 263 pages.

The first quotation is from the Introduction (p. 7):

In philosophical studies, I had a sketchy knowledge of Muslim philosophers. Al-Farabi, Averroes, and Avicenna were frequent names in Aquinas. Indeed, the whole of the *Summa contra gentiles* dealt with the Muslim understanding of Aristotle, Plato, Scripture, and other fundamental writings. It seems ironic, in a way, that the voluntarism that came to rule the Muslim world is almost identical with the will philosophy that grounds much of Western public life. Voluntarism is the philosophical-theological view that no rational order exists in things or in human nature. What is behind all reality is a will that can always be otherwise. It is not bound to any one truth. The opposite of any position can, with equal right, be valid. Evil can be good, good can be evil, if will, divine or human, is behind each existing thing. Benedict XVI noted the voluntarism on both Islam and secularism in his Regensburg lecture of September 12, 2006.

The second quotation is from the Conclusion (p. 218):

Islam is a religion. It does advocate violence in the achievement of its lofty goal. But at bottom, it cannot explain the real origin of its own Qur’anic texts and justify its treatment of “infidels” as anything but aggressors. Calling everyone outside the inner zone of Muslim peace to be enemies, subject to death, is simply wrong, as is the second-class status of all non-Muslim people within the religion’s present order.

**(James Swetnam. S.J., September 14, 2021)**