

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Adapted from 'Sunday Examiner'

Today's Gospel, from Matthew, together with the first Reading from Leviticus, presupposes the existence and the applicability of the Ten Commandment, also known as the Decalogue, from the Greek expression "ten words" or "ten statements."

As Catholics we hold in faith that the Ten Commandments are substantially part of the natural law; that, in other words, they are written by the Creator within the heart of every creature. We also hold that these Ten Commandments were reaffirmed by God through the great prophet Moses.

Finally, we believe that these Commandments, which exist for our welfare since they express what is advantageous for our nature as children of God, can never change, and that they bind all human beings everywhere and at every time.

The first three Commandments, as usually enumerated, focus on man's responsibilities to God in himself; the final seven, to God as he is seen and loved in one's fellow men.

Today's Gospel and First Reading obviously point to seeing and loving God in others. Specifically, we must honour and respect others, regardless of their adverse attitude—even hostility—towards us. This is not to say that we condone their actions: of course not. Nor is it to pretend that feelings of hurt—emotional traumas—may not be experienced by us when we are insulted by or rejected, or wronged in any way. That we invariably feel pain indicates that we are only human. That we can overcome these feelings by an act of the will aided by God's grace, indicates that we are Christians.

Today's Gospel and First Reading remind us not to allow ourselves to be governed by bitter or revengeful feelings against others, but rather to live by our higher faculties of mind and will, and with God's help, which he invariably grants to those who sincerely seek.

To live by these Gospel principles may seem like foolishness to those who do not know Christ; St. Paul, in today's Second Reading, stresses this. But, as St. Paul adds, so-called human wisdom is not wisdom at all unless it conforms to God's wisdom, and, again, God's wisdom is that our giving in to feelings of resentment, vendetta, or hatred, only separates us from God, and consequently, weakens us as persons destined for his eternal embrace.

On the other hand, as St. Paul adds, fraternal respect, cultivated in Christ's name, helps to strengthen one's own person. And not only this it helps to bind together the whole Christian community, from which we all derive strength. In this sense, it undermines factionalism, and serves as spiritual cement joining us closer together, and to the risen Lord.

Thus the Ten Commandments are revealed as positive aids in helping us to conform to God's will that we be one in him—in his peace, in his happiness.

Adopted from 'Sunday Examiner'

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Leviticus 19:1-18

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Matthew 5:38-48

February 23, 2014

靈 修 生 活

「當 愛 你 們 的 仇 人」

吉 朝 芳 神 父

今天我們所讀的三段經文，都是籍着耶穌基督所講論的「真福八耶端」而引申的。其中所論可能有些與我們的現實生活和思想不大合理，但我們要了解，新約福音是為了滿全舊約的法律，使法律更加完美。法律是人用文字所寫的一些條文；是條文，不是命令。對於不合理的條文，耶穌籍「真福八耶端」而使之滿全。比如「以眼還眼，以牙還牙」，是梅瑟給以民所定的一種「報復」的法律。中國人也有話說「殺人償命」「以命抵命」；如果一時報復不了，又有「君子報仇，十年未晚」，這也可以講是一種「報復」性的思想行為，與梅瑟所定的法律很相合，但都不是完美的法律。對於梅瑟的法律，因不完整，不是天主的法律，耶穌不同意，也不贊成，祂叫我們不要報復，甚至「有人掌擊你的右頰，你把另一面也轉給他」。耶穌以此作了更正。當然，這是耶穌為了便於講論而舉的例子，並非「命令」。

何以耶穌又要我們不要抵抗敵人呢？中國人有句話說：「好漢不吃眼前虧」，教訓我們雖受點傷害，但明哲保身，可保安全。此外，中國人也相信「善有善報，惡有惡報」。但這些都不符合耶穌的意思。祂要求我們不但不要反抗，但要愛；不但愛近人，也要愛你的仇人。愛是天主的誡命。天主為了愛我們，把其獨生子賞給我們；又因為人人是天主的兒女，所以要我們彼此相愛。這就是「太陽照惡人，也照善人」的道理。由於這愛的誡命，我們可以知道，耶穌所講論天主的國是真實的，因為其他宗教講的是「偶像」，不是愛；而且他們也辦不到。耶穌要我們不要報復，當然有許多原因，因為按人的思想習慣，是籍報復討回公道。但公道是否可以討回，很難說，有時適得其反，很可能又增加了傷害，所以要我們「當愛你們的仇人」。

但如何培植愛呢？應先在家庭中實行，如父母愛兒女、夫妻彼此相愛。世上沒有兩個完全相同的人，即使雙胞胎也是如此。所以要彼此了解，容忍各自的缺點，不要等對方來原諒，先就寬恕了對方。這是愛的最高表現。兒女看到父母這樣，他們也會學習原諒別人的過錯，也會愛人。要知道，世上實在沒有仇人，「仇人」就是我們自己，是在我們自己家中。當然，有許多人言行不檢點，製造分裂，對這些人愛的實行是比較困難的，但要用耐心接受他們，給他們祈禱，讓天主來改變他們。天主說：「你們應當是成全的」，這並非要求我們必定十全十美，但我們既因著天主的救贖，又蒙受祂的祝福，便應努力做天主喜愛的人。

我曾經讀到一句話：「一個微笑，能給人一個安慰」。一句話可以給人安慰，痛苦中給人鼓勵。在我們日常生活中，我們也可以籍着細小的事情，來顯揚天主的愛。愛能美化我們的生活，我們應從自己的家庭開始實行，再帶給其他的人。

不報復可能容易做到，但要愛仇人往往很難。但我們因著天主的智慧，是可以的。求天主賞給我們真正愛人的心，勇於為他人犧牲作奉獻；讓我們去愛那些我們不愛的人。

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 四 年 二 月 廿 三 日

肋 19:1-18; 格前 3:16-23; 瑪 5:38-48