

6th Sunday of the Year A

*All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes,
'No' if you mean no. (Mt 5:37)*



First Reading

Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20

If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him.

For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

Jesus said to his disciples: "For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court.

You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No' if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

Meditation

The New Testament is explicit: there is one Law of Christ and it is new. Far from abolishing the old Law, this Law fulfils it by emphasizing interior observance. This law calls for justice which surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees. This law is radical because the call of Jesus goes beyond the letter to a more authentic life. For Jesus, the human heart is decisive.

Hatred is prohibited: anger is the beginning of murder. Coveting another's spouse is forbidden: there are looks which are as bad as adultery. Repudiation of a spouse is not allowed: this can only come from hardness of heart. The making of oaths, true or false, is not permitted: it is enough to be fully committed to our word.

We who believe that the gospel is not some sweet, indulgent consolation, are confronted by unprecedented demands without compromise. We could have the impression of being trapped. Why should we be surprised that there is within us as in the disciples something that is indignant, when Jesus abruptly declares that riches are an impediment to the kingdom: "Then who can be saved?" (Mark 10:26). Christian morality is impossible without the support of life in Christ, consciously lived. Without him, we can do nothing. With him, everything is possible. To put on the mind of Christ is the only way to fulfil the law in spirit and in truth.

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These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

Gospel

Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother 'Fool' he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him 'Renegade' he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No' if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

Meditation

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