

Cycle A – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Feb. 12, 2023

“Love fulfills and deepens God’s commands ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 119)

Leader: In my distress I called to the Lord and he answered me.

O Lord deliver me from the lying lip, from treacherous tongue.

All: O treacherous tongue? Sharp arrows of a warrior with fiery coals of brushwood, woe to me.

Leader: All too long have I dwelt with those who hate peace. When I speak of peace they are ready for war.

**All: Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord!
Amen**

First Reading – Sirach 15. 15-20

The book of Sirach has always generated widespread interest among scripture scholars. It is not included in Protestant translations of the Bible and was removed from Hebrew scripture shortly after the first century. The first 43 chapters of Sirach offer moral instruction, which is exactly the focus of today’s reading. The passage stresses that woman and men have to take responsibility over their moral actions, in that each person can choose to follow the commandments. Ultimately, each person can choose eternal life or eternal death.

1. Do you view the extensive freedom God gives to us his people as a blessing?
2. Why does God give us such freedom?

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Paul wrote this letter at Ephesus to the people of Corinth as a simple yet profound attempt to bring the Gospel to a group of people who lacked in any formal education. In this reading Paul speaks of a higher wisdom that our finite limited minds cannot comprehend. The promise of what complete faith in God can bring us: “Eye has not seen... (re-read 9-10).

1. What do you envision that God has prepared for those who love him?
2. How can you invite a family member or friend to Mass this week who has allowed their vision of a world beyond this one to dim?

Gospel – Matthew 5:17-37

As a devout Jew, Jesus adhered to the Torah – the Jewish “Law of Moses” – and he was zealous about God’s commands. At the same time, he goes deeper than merely keeping the law, he also stresses love, justice, mercy and faith. In this passage from Matthew, Jesus reveals that God’s commandments are to govern our hearts, thoughts and intentions, and not only our actions. “Tearing out one’s eye” or “cutting off one’s hand or foot” are examples of hyperbole – or exaggerated speech – which is used to make a strong point about the call to conversion. The message is that sight and limbs are to be used for God’s glory, and never to abuse others or treat them as objects. Jesus stresses the dignity of the human person, and proclaims God’s design for our lives and our interactions with others.

1. Is “following the commandments” different than living as a transformed follower of Jesus?
2. What part of Jesus’ teaching challenges you the most? What comforts you?

LIVING THE WORD

What is God's challenge for me this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: We pray for our parish community as we strive to be salt and light in our compassion for those most in need far and near. We pray to the Lord.

Invite other intentions, then end with "Our Father ...")

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: The word of God is a light to our feet.

All: May our lives reflect the word of God.

Leader: The word of God is a grace-filled gift.

All: May our lives reflect the word of God.

Leader: The word of God brings comfort and hope.

All: May our lives reflect the word of God.

Leader: Let us share with one another the sign of Christ's peace.