

First Reading: Sirach 15.15-20

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2.6-10

Gospel: Matthew 5.17-37

*This morning the book of Sirach speaks to us about “free choice”. God lays everything out before us and always allows us the right to choose. It is up to us if we choose the good or the bad. And these do not have to be big grandiose choices. They can be as simple as waking in the morning and choosing to be happy or sad that it is a new day. A friend of mine says “*I can be cheerful or I can be grumpy this day; I can put others or I can put myself first today.*” (Patrick McGee, OMI)*

(pause)

In the Gospel Jesus speaks to us about the “Law” and how we must choose to live it. (pause)

Jesus says quite clearly that he has not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. And ‘fulfill’ means ‘to bring to completion; to achieve or realise. That is why Jesus adds it is not enough to just NOT murder but also that our hearts cannot be full of anger or hatred. (pause) If I meet another and am barely ‘civil’ to that person and all the while I am filled with anger or blame at how I perceive or judge them to be then I am not loving them for my heart is not engaged. (pause) The letter of the law in itself is never enough.

This is where our attitudes come into play – how we look at someone or something – through a lens – from a particular ‘inner stance’.

The question becomes not if we will follow the law but HOW!

Last week Fr. Richard talked to us about living in the light as he spoke of St. Eugene de Mazenod who founded the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He talked of the ‘Mazenodian charism’ which all of us here this morning share in

because we at St. Joes are part of this Oblate parish – a community within a community. We learned how St. Eugene found a way to live out his Good Friday conversion as he experienced the personal love of God through Jesus on the Cross - what that looked like 200 years ago, and what it looks like today within our parish. A very particular ‘inner stance’.

St. Eugene - when he realized, when he became aware of the depth of God’s personal love for him was radically changed. (pause) When we realize how deeply we are loved – by our spouses – our children or our parents – our siblings, - by God - we realize that the one desire we have is to respond to that love. *“To answer that love is the greatest task in all the world, says William Barclay - for it presents us with the task the like of which those who think in terms of law never dream of, and with an oblation more binding than the obligation to any law.”* (William Barclay p 153)

Pause

Henri Nouwen once said “that nobody is shot with a bullet who is not first shot with a word – and nobody is shot with a word who is not first shot with a thought.”

Pause

Ron Rolheiser in an article titled: “Thou Shalt Not Kill!” said: “We do it in the negative and suspicious judgements we make about each other (pause) ‘She always thinks she’s better than others!’ ‘He’s a sham, everything he does is for show!’ ‘She’s so proud of herself, but she should be staying home and taking care of her own children.’” Pause

Ron went on to say that: “Paranoia, false suspicion, harsh judgement, cynicism, negativity, be it in word or *attitude*, also kill.”

These are some of my biggest battles – my own attitudes which seem to sneak up on me over and over and that I have to consciously work on.

If I am asked to do a task and I say yes but it is grudging and closed then my heart is blocked and I am choosing how I will live the law. If I stop to help someone but view them through the eyes of arrogance and disdain, judging them – then I am not loving them for again my heart is blocked and again I choose to kill in my heart. So this attitude is ‘the how’ we answer with or without love.

St. Eugene as he lay dying said to the Oblates around him “That you practice towards each other - Charity, charity, charity”. We are each called to look at each other - all others (pause) with a love that reflects our inner stance.

Pause

Last weekend a friend of mine ended his blog writing: “Our lives are to “let the Light shine”, overcoming the darkness of the accumulation of “alternative facts and truths” which make up the “ways of the world” (Patrick McGee, OMI)

Our inner stance will colour everything we do. So - let the light shine – that is how we can choose to keep the law.

Resources:

William Barclay – The New Daily Study Bible – *The Gospel Matthew Volume One*
Scripture in depth for the 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time by Reginald H. Fuller

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI – *Thou Shalt Not Kill* – February 20, 2012

St. Louis University – Working With the Word 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Focussing the Gospel

Herve Aubin, OMI – *The Founder of the Oblates Saint Eugene de Mazenod*

Patrick McGee, OMI – Grace Notes blog