

2020 February 23

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Leviticus 19.1-2, 17-18, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (18b)

Psalm 103, "The Lord is merciful and gracious." (8a)

Second: 1 Corinthians 3.16-23, "All belong to you, and you belong to Christ." (22b)

Gospel: Matthew 5.38-48, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (44)

Need backing up, not to hit back

"I am the Lord"! So what? So "you have to love your neighbor as yourself." This is God's law given through Moses. We are not level up with God to ask why and 'so what'! The reason is, God is God and we are his making, and he doesn't need our consensus to give his Law! Of course, God is not a democrat! We the democrats with a fair amount of knowledge about our rights and entitlements do not like this kind of arguments, though they 'may be' right and valid, and the only means of peace and salvation on earth.

We are not very comfortable with Jesus when he tells us to show the other when you get a strike on your right cheek; to give the cloak also to the one who snatches away your coat; to go two miles when forced to go one; to love your enemy, and so on. Over and above or underlying all the entitlements of God on us and the demands and commands of Jesus, we have a reason: **God does exactly these and much more to each of us, not once a day but infinite times.** Because of his doing this to us and because of his infinite mercy, compassion and love towards us we happen to live, move and have our being.

The demand of Jesus is because he wants to share his family, which is the Holy Trinity, with us; or he wants to incorporate us into that family; he wants to make us truly the sons and daughters of God for which he came down and became man, and when we are made so we have to behave like a member of this family, his family, and appropriate and live its dignity. Hence God's command of love and Jesus' demand for it are in order that we may be perfect like the Father who is perfect.

God is content with nothing but perfection, and he is aware that we by ourselves are incapable of attaining such perfection. That is the reason God loves us with an infinite love, forgives us without any limit and condition, and is trying to gather us into himself. If at all we ponder on St. Paul's submission to us today, we will be better tuned to this awesome God and Father. Paul tells us, "*Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise*" (1 Corinthians 3:18). Hence if someone from this age thinks that you Christians are fools and superstitious, take it easy, and say "Amen"!

Fr. George