

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time 2-16-14

**Opening comments on how to process the fraud by a priest (from the poor) and the deceit of a high ranking retired police official in a Christian manner. Refer to Gospel of Mark.**

**Who are the faithful ones. Not the disciples (who later gave their lives in witness of the risen Lord). It was the everyday people: the Syrophenician woman with the sick daughter; the centurion official with the sick son; the blind man. Bartimaeus, the women at the cross, the Pharisee Nicodemus.**

(pause)

**As I was writing this reflection, the phone rang. I picked it up and a friend of mine asked me what I was doing. I said I was meditating on the Sermon on the Mount. "Oh," he said, "That's just a list of things you can't do."**

**The Sermon on the Mount is much more than a list of things we cannot do. It is more like the fence at Henry Ford high school next door.**

**Have you noticed the large fence around Henry Ford High School. Did you see how the top rungs are bent? It is to protect the students from people wandering in.**

**Well, today's section of the Sermon on the mount is a lot like that fence at Henry Ford. Rabbis in the time of Jesus leaned heavily on the law to protect the people in their relationship with God. But often they just ended up developing more and more laws which distanced themselves from God. Religion has a way of doing that. But not the Rabbi Jesus.**

**In today's gospel we focus on three key points Jesus raises and his suggestions on how to build a fence around these parts of the law so that we can be close to the Lord. The three are:**

- Thou shall not kill. (one of the ten commandments)**
- Thou shall not commit adultery. (one of the ten commandments)**
- If you are at odds with another person, leave your gift at the altar and first go be reconciled with that person and then return.**

**Jesus gives us an extended reflection on "Thou shall not kill". After all, he is a rabbi. He invites us to seek the roots of violence in our lives. He says that if we are angry with our brother and sister, we have already committed an act of violence towards them.**

**With all the violence which surround us and is often within us, we need to know how anger rises in us, comes to expression, and then subsides. (p. 81) The cocktail of violence: drinking/drugs + fire arms + anger can lead to homicide.**

**Thou shall not commit adultery ( Jesus' comments)**

**We should watch lust and note how it grips us, comes to expression, and then subsides. (p. 81)**

**Lust can cause us internal hurt, broken relationships unwanted children, abortions, rape.**

**Jesus comments on forgiveness (Leave your gift at the altar). We should also come to understand how we want shortcuts to forgiveness, how we hesitate and sometimes completely stall when it comes to initiating reconciling conversations.**

**For some people it can be years when we have since we have talked to a relative.**

**Why are the drives to anger and lust so powerful and the drive to reconciliation so weak?" p.81**

**We need to do a lot of work on this is the Sermon on the Mount can become more than a series of things we can't do.**

**Jesus' sermon is actually revealing the very heart of God to us; he is telling how someone close to the Father would act.**

**We invites us to grow in to fullness of life.**

**The question comes down to what the first disciples had to ask themselves, "Does Jesus Christ offer us the fullness of life? Is he the expression of God in human flesh. Is he the way, the truth and the life? Is he the source of happiness?"**

**If we answer "Yes", then we have to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously. As St. Paul says, "Our attitude must be the same as Christ's."**

**Jesus invites us to explore our inner heart and ask:**

**Why are the drives to anger and lust so powerful and the drive to reconciliation so weak?" The more we find the answer to that question, the more we will discover how counter cultural Christ's way of living is from what we experience in our world.**

**In today's first reading from the Book of Sirach we read the words, "Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him."**

**May we choose life and good, not evil and death.**

**Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is a roadmap to eternal life.**

**We simply need to study it and follow along his way.**

