

**GOSPEL**

Mt 5:20-22, 27-28, 33-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

*Such was said to your ancestors; but I am speaking to you.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 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.

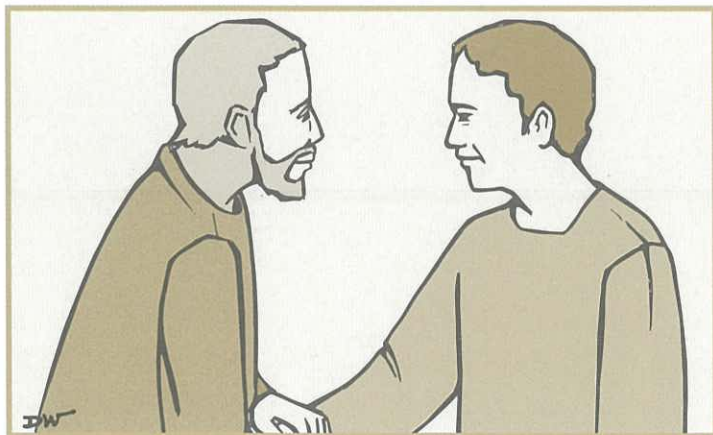
‘You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors; You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court;

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say 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.’

### ■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form 5:17-37



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# Reflections on the Gospel

## PLANTING THE LAW IN THE HEART

In today's Gospel Jesus reinterprets the Law of Moses in a way that, without sweeping aside the values the law sought to protect, prioritises values such as justice, mercy, and faith in human relationships (cf. Matt 23:23).

Over against the law's stark prohibitions ('You shall not ...') his pronouncements seek to go beyond mere external restraint to plant the value enshrined in the prohibition deep within the human heart.

So over against 'You shall not kill ...,' Jesus addresses the anger in the heart that might lead someone to kill. Deal with that and the prohibition simply doesn't arise.

Likewise in the matter of adultery, to a man's fundamental attitude to a woman. Is she an object for sexual exploitation (lust) or a fellow human being demanding equality and respect? Get the attitude right and all else will fall into place.

Where the old dispensation looked at divorce entirely from the male perspective and set in place what is basically a "harm minimisation" process, Jesus' exclusion of it stems from a holistic view of marriage as a lifelong union of equals in mutual fidelity and companionship.

Likewise, such trust and faithfulness should prevail in the community of the Kingdom that, to have their word taken seriously, its members should not have to have recourse to oaths—fraught, as such assertions are, with the danger of taking God's holy name in vain.

Looking back, what draws all these pronouncements of Jesus together is an essentially relational sense of human life, flourishing where respect, faithfulness, and consideration of the other prevail.

**Brendan Byrne, SJ**



SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

16 FEBRUARY 2020

## FIRST READING

Sir 15:15-20

A reading from the book of Sirach

*He never commanded anyone to be godless.*

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.

### ■ The word of the Lord.

**RESP PSALM** Ps 118:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34. R. v. 1

**R. Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!**

1. They are happy whose life is blameless, / who follow God's law! / They are happy those who do his will, / seeking him with all their hearts. **R.**

2. You have laid down your precepts / to be obeyed with care. / May my footsteps be firm / to obey your statutes. **R.**

3. Bless your servant and I shall live / and obey your word. / Open my eyes that I may consider / the wonders of your law. **R.**

4. Teach me the demands of your statutes / and I will keep them to the end. / Train me to observe your law, / to keep it with my heart. **R.**

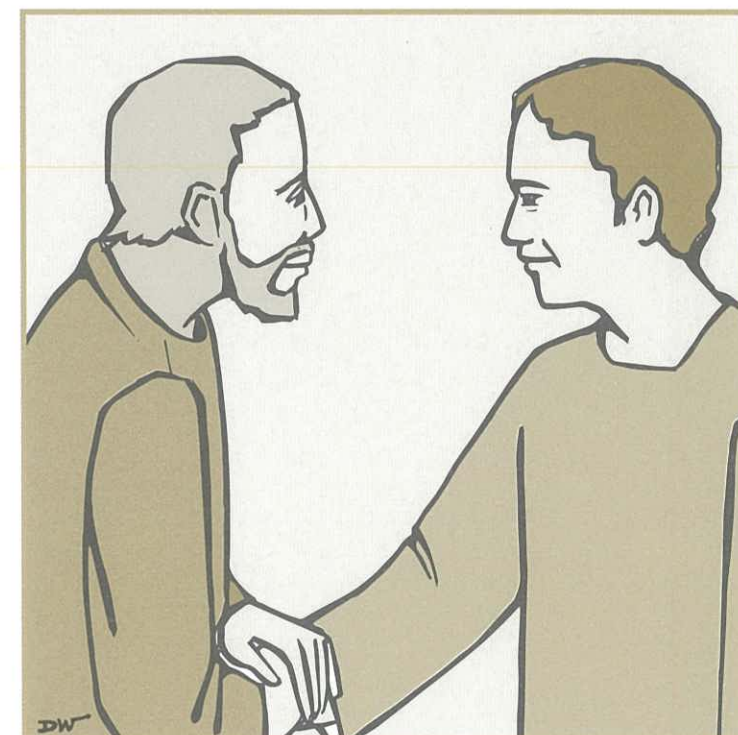
## SECOND READING

1 Cor 2:6-10

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

*God in his wisdom predestined our glory before the ages began.*

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.

### ■ The word of the Lord.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia! / Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; / you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. / Alleluia!