

Sunday Bulletin

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

Communion Antiphon † Psalm 9: 2-3

I will recount all your wonders, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

(cont.) Jesus begins with quoting the Mosaic standard for court justice: “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” That is, a judge should limit the punishment of an offender to the amount of harm he caused.

Jesus’ teaching raises many questions. “Should not the evil man be resisted? Should we just let a crazed gunman run into a school and shoot little kids up without doing anything? Should we let burglars kill us and take our goods if confronted with a home invasion?”

Actually, no. There is a place and even an obligation for self-defense in the Christian life, and the Catechism discusses it clearly in the section dealing with the fifth commandment (§2263-2267). Thus, one actually has a grave moral obligation to do anything necessary – up to lethal force – to stop a crazed gunman headed toward little kids.

When Jesus says, “you heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’” he is probably summarizing two passages from the law: Lev 19:13-18, concerning love for enemies; and Deut 20:16-18, which dictates total warfare (= “hatred”) against the Canaanites, the enemies of Israel. The total warfare against the Canaanites was a troubling feature of Old Testament law, a moral imperfection (like divorce) permitted by Moses, in this case to prevent the apostasy and assimilation of the people of Israel to the debased Canaanite culture. As Jesus removed the concession for divorce in last week’s reading, so now he corrects the commands on “hatred” of enemies. “Love your enemies,” Jesus says. Human nature is to love those who love you, so there is no merit in it. Only the sociopath or psychologically dysfunctional hates those who love him. To be like God, to have any moral merit, we must love even the unlovable, because this is the *imitatio Dei*. God loves the unlovable, starting with each one of us, so we must do the same.



Entrance Antiphon † Psalm 13 (12): 6.

O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord who has been
bountiful with me.

Jesus Teaching, Michel Gonnot (priest and scribe), 1474, Français 916, fol. 69r, National Library of France, Département des manuscrits, accessed at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8539714c/f143.item>.

First Reading † Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

You must love your neighbour, as yourself.

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: ‘Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: “Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.” “You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart.

You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm ‡ Psalm 102: 1-4, 8, 10, 12-13.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. **R.**

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion. **R.**

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults. **R.**

As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.
As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him. **R.**

Second Reading ‡ 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

All things are yours, but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Make no mistake about it; if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture says: The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are; or again: God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise. So there is nothing to boast about in anything human: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and

Christ belongs to God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation ‡ 1 John 2:5

Alleluia, alleluia!

Whoever keeps the word of Christ,
grows perfect in the love of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel ‡ Matthew 5: 38-48

Love your enemies.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection by Dr John Bergsma at <http://www.thesacredpage.com/2017/02/loving-those-you-hate-7th-sunday-of-ot.html>

This Sunday we read the last two of the "Six Antitheses," the six statements of Jesus following the form, "You have heard it said ... but I say to you" (Matt 5:21-48). Last week we saw the Antitheses concerned with murder (vv. 21-26), adultery (vv. 27-30), divorce (vv. 31-32), and swearing (vv. 33-37). This Sunday we deal with vengeance (vv. 38-42) and hatred of enemies (vv. 43-48).

In these Antitheses, Jesus presumes to correct not only the common interpretation of the Law of Moses, but sometimes the Law of Moses itself. It is difficult to exaggerate the incredible shock that would be felt by Jesus' contemporary Jewish audience in hearing him teach in this way. In some strains of Judaism, Moses was considered almost divine. There was no one above Moses but God himself: no subsequent prophet was ever Moses' equal (Deut 34:10-12). In short, the way Jesus teaches amounts to an implicit assertion of his divinity. Jesus says things that only God has the authority to pronounce.