

Sunday 6th (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 5,17-37): Jesus said to his disciples: «Do not think that I have come to remove the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to remove but to fulfill them. I tell you this: as long as heaven and earth last, not the smallest letter or stroke of the Law will change until all is fulfilled. So then, whoever breaks the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys them and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, then, that if you are not righteous in a much broader way than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

»You have heard that it was said to our people in the past: 'Do not commit murder; anyone who does kill will have to face trial'. But now I tell you: whoever gets angry with a brother or sister will have to face trial. Whoever insults a brother or sister deserves to be brought before the council; whoever calls a brother or a sister "Fool" deserves to be thrown into the fire of hell. So, if you are about to offer your gift at the altar and you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with him, and then come back and offer your gift to God. Don't forget this: be reconciled with your opponent quickly when you are together on the way to court. Otherwise he will turn you over to the judge, who will hand you over to the police, who will put you in jail. There you will stay, until you have paid the last penny.

»You have heard that it was said: Do not commit adultery. But I tell you this: anyone who looks at a woman to lustfully has in fact already committed adultery with her in his heart. So, if your right

eye causes you to sin, pull it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. It was also said: anyone who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce. But what I tell you is this: If a man divorces his wife except in the case of unlawful union, he causes her to commit adultery. And the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

»You have also heard that people were told in the past: Do not break your oath; an oath sworn to the Lord must be kept. But I tell you this: do not take oaths. Do not swear by the heavens, for they are God's throne, nor by the earth, because it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great king. Not even swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. Say yes when you mean yes and say no when you mean no. Anything else you say comes from the devil».

«Do not think that I have come to remove the Law and the Prophets»

Fr. Givanildo dos SANTOS Ferreira
(Brasilia, Brazil)

Today, Jesus tells us: «I have come to fulfill the Law» (Mt 5, 17). What is the Law? What is 'The Prophets'? By the Law and the Prophets, Jesus meant two different sets of books of the Old Testament. The Law refers to the works believed to have been written by Moses; the Prophets, as the name itself indicates, are the works of the Prophets and the Sapiential books.

In Today's Gospel, Jesus refers to those who are considered the summary of the moral code of the Old Testament: The commandments of the law of God. According

to Jesus, the Law isn't merely about external principles. It isn't an external imposition, on the contrary. Actually, God's Law corresponds to the ideal of perfection that is deeply rooted in the heart of every man. This is the reason why they who keep the commandments not only achieve the accomplishment of their human aspirations, but also the perfection of christianism, or, in Jesus's words, achieves the perfection of the Kingdom of God. «Whoever obeys them and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven» (Mt 5, 19).

«But I say to you» (Mt 5,22). The observance of the Law isn't restricted to the letter, since «For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life» (2Cor 3:6). This is the meaning in which Jesus employs His authority to interpret the Law according to its most authentic spirit. As Jesus interprets it, the Law is extended to its ultimate consequences: the respect for life is connected to the eradication of hate, vengeance and offense; the chastity of the body, to the purity of intentions; the perfection of matrimony depends on fidelity and indissolubility; the truth of the word given starts with the respect for pacts. By observing the law, Jesus «fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear» (Vatican II Council).

The example of Jesus invites us to that perfection of Christian life in which we practice with actions what we preach with words.