

Sunday 7th (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 5, 38-48): Jesus said to his disciples: «You have heard that it was said: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I tell you this: do not oppose evil with evil; if someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn and offer the other. If someone sues you in court for your shirt, give your coat as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give when asked and do not turn your back on anyone who wants to borrow from you.

»You have heard that it was said: 'Love your neighbor and do not do good to your enemy'. But this I tell you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. For he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good, and he gives rain to both the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what is special about that? Do not even tax collectors do as much? And if you are friendly only to your friends, what is so exceptional about that? Do not even the pagans do as much? For your part you shall be righteous and perfect in the way your heavenly Father is righteous and perfect».

«You shall be righteous and perfect in the way your heavenly Father is righteous and perfect»

Fr. José PLAZA Monárdez
(Calama, Chile)

Today, the word of God teaches us that the original source mandate means to sanctity is through God: «Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect» (Mt 5,48). He inspires us and we are drawn to Him. The way is set out for us by the new law, that of Love. Love is the solid driver of our convictions, expressed so clearly in this fifth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The old law of Talion from the book of Exodus (cf. Ex 21,23-35), that was to be the law to avoid all revenge and restrict "eye for an eye", the terror of war, is definitively superseded by the law of love. We are given, in these verses, an entire Carta Magna for moral belief; love of God and thy neighbor.

Pope Benedict XIV tells us, «it is only through service to others that opens my eyes as to what God does for me and to how much He loves me». Jesus gives us a law whereby justice is infinite, whereby evil is not defeated by causing more hurt, but by expelling it entirely from our lives, thereby reducing its hold on us.

In order to triumph, Jesus tells us, one must have a strong hold of our own interior lives and be clear by which law we live, that of unconditional love, free and magnanimous. Love led Him to the Cross, as love triumphs over hate. This is the way to victory, without violence, with humility and abundant love as God is love translated into action. If our actions are driven by this same love that will not abandon us, Our Father will recognize us as his children. This is the perfect pat, one of superabundant love that places us in the current of the kingdom, whose most loyal expression is the sublime manifestation of overflowing love that God has drenched our hearts with through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5,5).