

### ***Homily for June 14, 2017***

Today's Gospel shows us something central to Jesus' self-understanding. He came to fulfill the Law. The one great principle of the Law was that in all things people must seek God's will, and that, when they know it, they must dedicate their whole life to the obeying of it.

This is what we see in Jesus. Apart from Jesus the Old Testament is essentially an unfinished symphony, a drama without a climax. It is the articulation of a hope, a dream, a longing—but without a realization of that hope, without a satisfaction of that longing. Israel knew itself to be the people with the definite mission to become holy and thereby to render the world holy. But instead, Israel fell into greater and greater sins, and instead of being the catalyst for the conversion of the world, the world was continually overwhelming and enslaving Israel.

Jesus came to complete the symphony by showing us what it means to fulfill the Law.

When we think of the Law, we understand its essence distilled in the Ten Commandments. These words are the essence and the foundation of all law. Their whole meaning can be summed up in one word—respect, or even better, reverence. Reverence for God and for the name of God, reverence for God's day, respect for parents, respect for life, respect for property, respect for personality, respect for the truth and for another person's good name, respect for oneself so that wrong desires may never overpower us—these are the fundamental principles behind the Ten Commandments, principles of reverence for God, and respect for our neighbours and for ourselves. Without them there can be no such thing as law. On them all law is based.

That reverence and that respect Jesus came to fulfil. He came to show men and women in actual life what reverence for God and respect for one another are like. This is why he says that whoever breaks one of the least of the Commandments will be called least in the kingdom of heaven and whoever keeps them will be called great.

Why is this? Because reverence for God and respect for others is what is at the essence of the heavenly life. Everything in Jesus' incarnation showed what it meant to live out the 10 Commandments in a way that had never been witnessed.

St. Paul in our reading from 2 Corinthians takes this and helps us to understand what it means for us. Jesus lived the Commandments perfectly. We can only do so imperfectly. If we think that by human effort alone we can live reverently and respectfully we will fail. We will experience a sense of condemnation. But when we declare our need daily for Grace listen again to what Paul discovered.

***Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***

We are not competent to live the Commandments in our own strength. But as we entrust ourselves to the Spirit, a deepening conversion happens.

Moses was given the 10 Commandments, and this was accompanied by a certain radiance, that Paul calls the fading glory. Although Moses was the one given the Commandments, it was Jesus who lived the Commandments in an unprecedented way. Because we have access to the Spirit of Jesus we are empowered to live the life of Grace so that in us is extended what was present in Jesus, reverence for God and true respect for people.

As we live a life rooted in the Grace of God and empowered by the Sacraments we will still fall short of how our Lord lived the Commandments. But as we continue to say, "Jesus help me live the commandments daily", we will be taking our place in the fulfilling of the Law given to Moses and completed in Jesus.