

JANUARY 19, 2021
Tuesday of the 2nd Week in OT
Mark 2: 23-28

“DO GOOD ALWAYS.”

Our gospel for today speaks about the third confrontation and conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees regarding the Law of the Prophets that affect the lives of the people. The other two conflicts are: First, the healing of the paralytic man (Mark 2: 1-12), last Friday gospel wherein four friends brought the man to Jesus, forgave his sins and healed him, and the Pharisees questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sins. Second, the calling of Levi or Matthew whom the Pharisees observed Jesus was dining with tax collectors and sinners wherein Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”¹

In today's gospel, Pharisees accused Jesus and the disciples of breaking the Sabbath by plucking heads of grain which is considered 'work' on the Sabbath day. For the Jews, this is the day God rested, so people need to rest, too, a law that must be observed. But Jesus maintains that human need has priority over ritual custom. “The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath. For more than five hundred years, from the time of the Babylonian captivity to the time of Jesus, the Jews had observed the law of the Sabbath. This secular observance became for them a strong sign of identity. The Sabbath was rigorously observed. At the time of the Maccabees, toward the end of the second century before Christ, this observance had reached a critical point. Attacked by the Greeks on Sabbath, the rebellious Maccabees preferred to allow themselves to be killed rather than to transgress the law of the Sabbath by using arms to defend their own life. For this, one thousand people died (I Mac 2: 32-38). Reflecting on the massacre, the Maccabee leaders concluded that they should resist and defend their own life, even on the Sabbath (I Mac 2:39-41). Jesus used the same attitude: to consider the law of the

¹ Mark 2: 17 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

Sabbath in a relative way in favor of human life, because the law exists for the good of human life, and not vice-versa!”²

My brothers and sisters, the Lord’s Day was aimed for our good and not for evil. We don’t withhold mercy and kindness in response to human need because this was not part of God's purpose and objective that we rest from unnecessary labor. The more we become closer to God and imitate Him, the more we need to be merciful, kind, compassionate and loving, and do the best that we can for the good of others. Do good works always and not postpone it.

² ocarm.org