

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. We continue our journey with Jesus through the Gospel of Mathew. Thus far, we met Jesus as he was being baptized, identified and affirmed as the beloved son of God and empowered with the Holy Spirit; we heard John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus being the one God sent to baptize with the Holy Spirit; we met Jesus leaving Nazareth, taking up residence in Capernaum to begin his ministry and beginning to call his disciples... Simon, Andrew, James and John followed him; we reflected on the most important, the central and the core of his message, the Beatitudes; we heard the great command of Jesus to all his followers: "You are the salt of the earth..." and "You are the light of the world..." (Mathew 5:13-16)

After giving us the Beatitudes and the command of Jesus to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Mathew gives us an astonishing statement of Jesus: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." (Mathew 5:17). Jesus lays down the eternal character of the law - the law shall be fulfilled.

This saying does not sound like Jesus - many would like to see it as coming from the author or the editor of the book than from Jesus himself. Jesus often broke what the Jews considered to be the Law. He did not observe many of the laws - in fact, he was condemned and crucified as a law-breaker. Yet, he seems to speak of the law with reverence, deep respect - "until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place." (Mathew 5:18) Jesus seems to say that the law is so sacred that not the smallest detail of it will ever pass away. What does this mean?

The Jews used the expression "The Law" in four different ways: (1) The Ten Commandments; (2) The Pentateuch - the five scrolls; (3) The Law and the Prophets meaning the whole Scripture; (4) the Oral or the Scribal Law. In the time of Jesus the last meaning was the most common and it was this law that Jesus chose not to observe. For many generations this scribal law was not written down - it was the oral law, handed down in the memory of generations of scribes.

In the middle of the third Century A.D., a summary of it was made and codified - that summary is known as Mishnah - it contains sixty three tractates on various subjects of the law - a book of about eight hundred pages in English. Later Jewish scholars made commentaries to explain the Mishnah - these commentaries are known as the Talmud. Jerusalem Talmud has twelve printed volumes; the Babylonian Talmud has sixty printed volumes.

To the strict orthodox Jew, religion and serving God were matters of keeping thousands of rules and regulations and they were matters of life and death. These were the rules that Jesus broke and when he spoke about fulfilling the law, he was not speaking about them. Jesus came to bring out the meaning of the Law - to fulfill it - to realize it and to achieve its purpose.

One of the leading pharisees asked Jesus about which commandment in the law was the greatest. Jesus replied, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Mathew 22: 36-40) Jesus raised the standard of loving to include enemies, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Mathew 5:44) He raised up the standard of loving even further, "love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34). This is the law that Jesus came to fulfill... love others as God loves, as Jesus loves – love that is other centered, all-embracing, selfless and steadfast!

A soldier who was a Christian made it his practice to conclude every day with Bible reading and prayer. As his fellow soldiers gathered in the barrack and retired for the night, he would kneel by his bunk and offer prayers to the Lord. The other soldiers saw this and began to mock and harass him. But one night the abuse went beyond verbal assault. As the soldier bowed before His Lord in prayer, one antagonist threw his boot through the dark and hit him in the face. The other soldiers snickered and jeered, hoping for a fight. But there was no retaliation. The next morning when the taunting soldier awoke, he was startled to discover something at the foot of his bed. There were his boots, returned and polished. That is the law that Jesus claimed he came to fulfill - not retaliation but going beyond hurt and violence to a very positive and affirmative act of loving kindness. That is the Christian spirit that Jesus calls us to nurture.

Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853) was born in modern-day Haiti and brought to New York City as a slave. When his master died, Pierre supported his master's widow, himself and the other house slaves from his income as a hairdresser. He attended daily Mass at St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street, the same parish that St. Elizabeth Seton attended. Pierre donated to various charities, generously assisting blacks and whites in need. He and his wife opened their home to orphans and educated them. The couple also nursed abandoned people who were suffering from yellow fever. Urged to retire and enjoy the wealth he had accumulated, Pierre responded, "I have enough for myself, but if I stop working I have not enough for others."

I encourage you to take a few minutes each day of this week to be still and reflect on how your day has been and on how you have tried to fulfill the law of love as Jesus teaches us.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 15, 2026

**Be a sign of the living Christ, do not be afraid of what the Lord asks of you.
Open yourselves to Christ, listen to Him in the silence of prayer.
Accompany those who are most fragile, take charge of those who are alone.
Be the seed of a more fraternal world! Be families with big hearts!
Be the welcoming face of the Church! And please pray, always pray!**
(Pope Francis)

Collect

O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**When you do the right thing, the good thing, the noble thing
and the wise thing, you find peace and serenity within.**

Sirach 15:15-20

The wise man advises his readers not to trust the counsel of the contemporary world that avoids human responsibility and turns to evil ways. Man must trust God, who gives him the grace and the wisdom that he needs to make good and right choices. He must prayerfully discern his choices with the wisdom of God and be faithful and loyal to the will and purpose of God.

Psalm 119

This Psalm is the longest Psalm in the Book of Psalms. It praises God for giving such splendid laws and instruction for people to live by. The author glorifies and thanks God for the Torah,

prays for protection from sinners, delights in the law's consolations, begs for wisdom to understand the precepts, and asks for the rewards of keeping them. The Psalm is fascinated with God's word directing and guiding human life. The poem is acrostic. Its twenty-two stanzas, of eight verses each, are in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the eight verses within a stanza begins with the same letter. Each verse contains one word for "instruction." There are nine words for "instruction," - law, statute, commandment, precept, testimony, word, judgment, way, and promise.

**Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
Who walk the law of the Lord.
Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
Who seek him with all their heart.**

I Corinthians 2:6-10

Paul speaks of the wisdom of God hidden in the heart of all who love God. God has given us his Holy Spirit to inspire us, guide us and help us discern his will and purpose. We must turn to the Holy Spirit dwelling in us for the wisdom that we need. This wisdom is available to us to help us make good and right and wise choices. The experiences of the spiritually mature can help us in this process of choosing what the loving thing to do is in a given situation. It is not enough for us to make good choices and right choices and do the loving thing. We must also make wise choices. It is up to us to prayerfully seek the wisdom of God and discern our choices.

Mathew 5:17-37

Jesus told the disciples that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill the law. He also told them that greatness in God's kingdom depended on faithfulness to God's law.

Jesus came to bring out the meaning and purpose of the law, to fulfill it, to realize it, to achieve its purpose. The real purpose of the law which Jesus came to fulfill is at the heart of the Ten Commandments and the beatitudes. One word that could identify this purpose is REVERENCE or deep respect – reverence for God, for self, for other and for all of God's creation. It is this reverence, deep respect, intimate love that Jesus came to fulfill, to show us in actual life what reverence for God and God's creation means.

Keep searching for the wisdom of God! Be faithful to God and God's law! Learn to fulfill God's law, to achieve its purpose!

In this excerpt, Mathew also offers us very challenging teachings of Jesus:

Your holiness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees! You are called to live higher standards of life. You are called to live virtuous lives!

All forms of prayer and worship call forth reconciliation. Sacrifice and worship assume genuine confession of sin, true penitence and forgiveness from the heart. Be reconciled with others! Be reconciled now!

Be aware of the words you speak. Be sensitive and speak affirming, encouraging, healing, supporting, empowering words!

Be aware of words that may insult or hurt others. Words could alienate you from the community - they break down relationship. Speak words that bring life and not death.

Make peace in time and make it now! Now is the time for reconciliation and peace!

Genuine Forgiveness is Unconditional. Learn to forgive from the heart!

Saint of the Day, February 15 - St. Claude de la Colombière and 20 other saints are remembered this day.

He was born in 1641 in Eastern France. In 1658, at the age of seventeen, Colombière entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Avignon. He did this despite what he recorded as "a terrible aversion for the life embraced". When he completed the two-year novitiate, he was sent to Paris to study theology at the College de Clermont. He was also assigned to be the tutor of the children of the Royal Minister of Finances, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. After completing his studies there, he was ordained a priest and initially assigned to teach at his former school in Lyon.

In 1674, after 15 years of life as a Jesuit, Colombière did his next period of probation known as the tertianship, which was to prove decisive in his life. After professing the Fourth Vow of the Society at the end of his tertianship on 2 February 1675, Colombière was appointed the rector of the Jesuit community at Paray-le-Monial, where he also became the spiritual director of the nuns of the Monastery of the Visitation Sisters located next to the church. In this way he came to know Sr. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Alacoque had suffered greatly from the disbelief of the other religious sisters of her monastery, and felt isolated in her situation of having experienced a series of private revelations from Christ in which she felt she was being called to promote devotion to his Sacred Heart. After speaking with her a number of times and after much prayer, Colombière was convinced of the validity of her visions and became both her supporter and a zealous apostle of the devotion.

In 1676 Colombière was sent to England as preacher to Mary of Modena, then the Duchess of York, wife of the future King James II of England. His zeal and the English climate soon combined to weaken his health and a pulmonary condition threatened to end his work in that country. In November 1678, while awaiting a recall to France, he was suddenly arrested and

thrown into prison, denounced as being a part of the Popish Plot alleged by Titus Oates against the English throne. Caught up in the anti-Catholic hysteria which resulted from this alleged plot, he was confined in severe conditions in Prison, where his fragile health took a turn for the worse. He was expelled from England in 1679 and returned to France with his health ruined by his imprisonment. He died in 1682. Pope John Paul II canonized Claude de la Colombière in 1992

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Do not walk alone!
You, young families, be guided by those who know the way,
you who are further along, be companions on the journey for others.
(Pope Francis)

