



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

THIS SUNDAY February 16 & BEYOND

Unattainable Goals?



When we read the excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount that the Lectionary brings us for this Sunday, we may get the impression that what Jesus is asking His followers is simply unattainable. Let us

be honest. Who has not been angry with brothers or sisters? Who has not called them bad names now and then? Who has not lusted with an attractive person in their mind?

The very idea of plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand if these parts of our body cause us to sin is too extreme to even consider it seriously.

So why is Jesus using this extreme language? Is He perhaps discouraging everyone from trying to follow Him? Or just warning us how inadequate we all are for God's kingdom?

Let us consider the different sayings carefully and then maybe we can get a better idea of His real intention.

In the first part He refers to anger, resentment, and insults among members of a family or community. All of these are attitudes and actions that disrupt the community; they kill the community, they dissolve it, so their effect is in some way comparable to the physical act of taking a life. He then talks about the inefficacy of carrying out ritual offerings if these disruptive attitudes and actions are not mended.

He insists on reconciliation as the only acceptable form of offering to God to atone for these acts.

Next He talks about the real impact of our thoughts in our lives. Thoughts are the seeds of our actions. So if our thoughts are opposed to what keeps the community together--thinking of a person as a means of satisfying our sexual desires only, without considering their real value or that person's attachment to another person. For instance, that can also destroy the community. All that could be done to prevent us from inclining to such destructive thoughts is worthwhile doing. The plucking out of eyes and cutting off of hands is an extreme image, of course, but such images were often used by Jesus to make His point unmistakably.

Finally He makes reference to the practice of oaths. After all, why do we need oaths? Is it not because our ordinary statements are not always true? The need of oaths is an indication of our lack of consistent truth in our words, in our everyday speech. If we normally always spoke the truth, swearing would make no sense at all. No real community can be formed on the basis of untruth. A loving community, the one that Jesus is trying to make His followers conform to, is based on truth. 'Truth will make you free', He said.

The goals of God's kingdom are certainly high and hard to attain. Jesus wants us to understand that we are a long way from being the ideal members of a community based on God's all-inclusive and unconditional love. When we understand this, we are more willing to depend on His grace and the Holy Spirit than on our own achievements. And we are always given the opportunity to be reconciled, to be forgiven and to start anew. So there is no reason to despair or give up. There is always hope and blessing in Jesus' way, the excellent way, the Way of Love.

Fr, Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany:
Ecclesiasticus 15:11-20 Psalm 119:9-16 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-24, 27-30, 33-17

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn High Mass (Church)

7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary Chapel)

WEDNESDAY Noon Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)
6:30pm Contemplative Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

THURSDAY Noon Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

FRIDAY Noon Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)
AA Meetings
8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY **The Last Sunday after the Epiphany**
8:00am Low Mass (Church)
10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)
AA Meeting
7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)