



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 15, 2026**

Theme: "I have come to complete the Law and the Prophets."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: 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.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: ¹⁷ 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. ¹⁸ I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ 'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ 'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not kill*; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. ²² But I say this to you: any one who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. ²³ So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. ²⁵ Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

²⁷ 'You have learnt how it was said: *You must not commit adultery*. ²⁸ But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

³¹ 'It has also been said: *Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal.*

³² But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³ 'Again, you learnt how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not break your oath, but must fulfill your oaths to the Lord.* ³⁴ But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. ³⁶ Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

Gospel Focus

Jesus has lots to say in today's gospel, which is taken from the Sermon of the Mount (Matt 5-7) for the third consecutive week. Importantly, he begins with the context in which his audience lives: "You have heard that it was said." Using the passive voice, Jesus acknowledges where the crowd has come to understand God's work in their lives, first of all through the Law of Moses and its interpretation. Through the Law, God desired to gather the people for himself. And to show them his love and care for them. Jesus acknowledges the importance of the Law here-in fact, it remains a guide, and one more thing that Jesus will bring to fulfillment. Jesus does not abrogate the Law, but in fact extends it further. Not murder alone, but anger as well; not just adultery, but lust also. Acknowledging their understanding and current practice, Jesus invites his audience to recognize God in a newer, more personal way-in himself-and challenges them to look beyond the written Law to its divine Author, present in their midst.

Gospel Reflection

It begins with the tiniest of gesture: an interested glance, the brush of a hand. Lifelong love builds from little expressions of care before it becomes total self-surrender to the beloved. At the opposite end of the spectrum, egregious acts of murder, betrayal, rejection, and deception begin with little sparks of anger, white lies, lustful looks. In today's gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples to watch out for the little things that undermine the love relationships.

The gospel belies any notion that Jesus overturns the Mosaic law or that the God of the Old Testament is a harsh God that issues strict commandments, while the God of the New commandment is a God of bountiful mercy who gave the law, to whom Jesus is devoted. Jesus insists on the enduring value of the law and his intent to fulfil the tiniest part of it.

What is new in his interpretation of the law, which at times were at odds with that of other religious leaders of his day. His is not a lax interpretation, but one that is even more demanding than theirs. To truly keep the law, one must go beyond it. Jesus speaks to his disciples about the little things that can erode their relationship with God and others and can escalate into major offences.

The formula "You have heard that it was said" introduces each of four commandments; this is followed by Jesus' invitation to go deeper: "But I say to you..." First, he speaks of taking steps to diffuse anger before it reaches a murderous stage. He gives three concrete examples. Primary is to avoid insulting one another. Then, if there is a rupture in a relationship, a ritual action alone will not mend it. A face-to-face reconciliation must be sought. Finally, conflicts should not be allowed to escalate to the point of litigation.

The final section centers on honesty in relationships. If Leviticus 19:12 admonished, "You shall not swear falsely by name, thus profaning the name of your God," Jesus says that relationships among Christians should be so transparent that there should be no

need for taking oaths at all.

By instructing his disciples to watch out for the little transgressions, he did not intend to frighten them into obeying a God who was lying in wait to punish them for every peccadillo. Rather, he alerts his followers that little slights, left unchecked, can lead to major offences, with dire consequences. By the same token, great love and greatness in God's reign begin with little acts of love toward the least brother or sister. One saint who epitomizes this teaching is St Therese of Lisieux. Through her "little way," she resolved to love all those she encountered in all the routine and ordinary interchanges of everyday life. Her greatness was recognized by her canonization only twenty-eight years after her death and the bestowal of the title of Doctor of the Church a century later.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Ecclesiasticus 15:16-21

¹⁶ If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. ¹⁷ He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. ¹⁸ Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. ¹⁹ For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. ²⁰ His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. ²¹ He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 118:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R: They are happy who follow God's law!

They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law!
They are happy who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts. **(R)**

You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care.
May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes. **(R)**

Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of your law. **(R)**

Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. **(R)**

Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

⁶ We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. ⁷ The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. ⁸ It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; ⁹ we teach what scripture calls: *the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.*

¹⁰ These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

226. *It means making good use of created things:* faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him:

My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.
My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.
My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you. (St. Nicholas of Flüe; cf. *Mt* 5:29-30; 16:24-26)

577. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus issued a solemn warning in which he presented God's law, given on Sinai during the first covenant, in light of the grace of the New Covenant:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law, until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (*Mt* 5:17-19)

578. Jesus, Israel's Messiah and therefore the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, was to fulfill the Law by keeping it in its all embracing detail - according to his own words, down to "the least of these commandments". (*Mt* 5:19) He is in fact the only one who could keep it perfectly. (Cf. *Jn* 8:46) On their own admission the Jews were never able to observe the Law in its entirety without violating the least of its precepts. (Cf. *Jn* 7:19; *Acts* 13:38-41; 15:10) This is why every year on the Day of Atonement the children of Israel ask God's forgiveness for their transgressions of the Law. The Law indeed makes up one inseparable whole, and St. James recalls, "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it." (*Jas* 2:10; cf. *Gal* 3:10; 5:3)

Sharing and Discussion

1. "Jesus says he has come not to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it." Do you experience a tension between an external obligation than faith fulfilled in love? What might Jesus be inviting to deepen or transform?
2. As you reflect on your relationships with others, what do they reveal about your relationship with God?
3. Matthew 5 reveals that the perfection Jesus calls us to is a wholeness of heart that goes beyond doing the minimum and is rooted in love. What does this Gospel reveal to you?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: O God, you gave the law for the good of all people. Grant us our prayers, help us to encounter Jesus who fulfills all law and leads us into the community of the "kingdom of heaven." We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen