



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE B

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As essential disciples, our behavior patterns are for the most part guided by our legal compass, that is, by obeying the law, both secular and Mosaic, for fear of punishment.

But in today's Gospel, we are called to a higher standard. We are called to be generative disciples guided by our moral compass, that is, by the two-part commandment taught by Jesus: love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

If we examine our conscience strictly within the structure of the legal compass, we are doing pretty much as the Jews were commanded by the scribes and Pharisees, to live by the law, examine our lives by how well we did that, and try not to do it again. But, of course, this rarely works because, as St. Paul says, we are slaves to the law.

This Gospel shows us the way to a higher standard of examining our conscience. Jesus tells us to examine our day through the guidance of our moral compass: love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And to love your neighbor as yourself.

As we grow spiritually on our pilgrim's journey in life, are we illuminated in our capacity to consistently live by this higher standard in our daily life?

As you reflect on this, and offer your reflection to others, be inspired by this Gospel, and pray that your witness might be an inspiration to others to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees along our journey toward the kingdom.

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

After that no one dared to ask him any question.