

The breath and scope of love that makes us a holy people brings these readings together. There are opportunities to deepen our understanding of evangelization in these readings. A lingering question for many will continue to be the distinction between the Law and the spirit of the Law. This filters down to the minutiae of being Church, eg., the old “fish on Friday” issue or how many angels can dance on a pin. Perhaps a review of the different “weight” that different kinds of Church documents have an effect on shaping our discipleship is in order. Behind all this, is the very important work of holiness so that we are indeed temples of the Spirit.

FIRST READING: Leviticus 19, 1-2. 17-18

Rarely used in the Lectionary, this book from the Torah contains ritual directions and rubrics for the temple, a liturgical calendar, provisions for ordaining an Aaronic priest, medical laws, and a code of holiness, where the reading is taken today, and laws about social relations to create a just society. This part of Leviticus, includes the “You have heard it said that . . .” statements to which Jesus is responding. Especially Leviticus 19-20 sounds like an expanded alternative form of the 10 Commandments, given in Ex 20, 1-7 and Dt 5, 6-21. The Catechism on pages 495-496 gives both versions and the catechetical formula version we’ve all memorized since St. Augustine, for your comparison.

Vs. 2: CCC 2811 The challenge of holiness in our world is addressed and a rationale for holiness is given here, and it is this: because we are created so that we might become like God, who is holy.

Vs. 18: CCC 2055 Jesus quotes vs. 18 of Leviticus 19 regarding love of neighbor. Indeed all the Law (Torah) is interpreted in light of the two yet one commandment to love, because God is love.

<p>KNOW YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>What is the Torah?</p> <p>Why are there three different versions of the commandments? Recite the catechetical formula together.</p>
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<p>LIVE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>Choose, in your group, one commandment and discuss its deepest meaning beyond the literal.</p> <p>Who is your neighbor? (When asked this question Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan.)</p>
<p>SHARE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>What are your responsibilities to your neighbor as an evangelist? In the communion of your parish?</p> <p>What is the best way to evangelize the command to holiness and love?</p>
<p>WORSHIP</p>	<p>What do you see as the connection between holiness and love?</p> <p>What does worship give the human person?</p>

First Reading

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 103, 1-2. 3-4. 8. 10. 12-13 A Psalm of Divine Providence

CCC 304 The Catechism uses this whole psalm to correct our wrong-headed notion that the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath and judgment. Listing all the good things God has done, the psalmist sets down only two responses on our part: fear of God and keeping His commandments. Many people bristle at the phrase “fear of God” which has more of the notion of “awe of God.” When we lose our capacity for awe, then we have lost a fundamental part of our humanity. Commenting on St Augustine’s City of God, Hollingworth writes: “Nor is the hollowness of scientific confidence in an ultimate completion of human knowledge that one day really will deliver us, finally, into the power of being able to predict ourselves out of all possibility of wonder and surprise.” (TLS121313) In other words, we risk being jaded and lose awe. We’re more awed by the fancy plastic produced by technology.

<p>KNOW YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>Who is God?</p> <p>Name the gifts God has given to us.</p>
<p>LIVE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>What makes us humans become angry and why do we hold on to anger?</p> <p>What does the psalmist mean when he writes that we are crowned with mercy and compassion?</p>
<p>SHARE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>Share with your spouse and/or family the ways you have seen that God is blessing you.</p> <p>Share the last time you felt, saw, or heard the “awe” of the divine providential care for yourself.</p>
<p>WORSHIP</p>	<p>What does it mean to say, “Bless the Lord, my soul?”</p> <p>What reason does the psalmist give for worship of God?</p>

SECOND READING: I Corinthians 3, 16-23

There are three important teachings in this passage: 1) “You are a temple of God;” 2) The contrast between the wisdom of God and the foolishness of this world; and 3) We all belong to God in the intimacy of the Trinity.

Vss. 16-17: CCC 797 St Augustine writes, “What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Church.” (*Sermo 267*) It is a communion, indeed conjugal (#798), of Spirit and Church just as the parts constitute the whole of the body. Obviously 1) and 3) above are very significant for the Church.

<p>KNOW YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>Why is St Paul eager to teach here and elsewhere in his letters that the Church is the Temple?</p> <p>What does the inside of the Temple look like? (cf. I Kings 6) Is that how you look inside?</p>
<p>LIVE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>What is the foolishness of this world?</p> <p>How can you tell the difference between foolishness and wisdom?</p>

<p>SHARE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>Who do you “belong to”?</p> <p>What is the difference and relationship between “faith” and “reason/ science”? (Benedict XV identifies two magisterial areas overlapping one another)</p>
<p>WORSHIP</p>	<p>What rationale does this passage give for worship?</p> <p>How does the final verse promote the idea of communion?</p>

Second Reading

GOSPEL: Matthew 5, 38-48 The Sermon on the Mount: Love Your Enemies

Jesus’ teaching completely overturns our notions of revenge and the narrow limits of human love as we see them. The saying “eye for an eye” goes back to a long misunderstood and misused passage also from Leviticus 24, 10-23, a must to study. Our human foolishness could not be more laid bare, and the way we can twist what God commands us. In a culture of revenge and unparalleled violence, this is a passage wherein Jesus becomes a “sign of contradiction.” It will be risky to take this on in a gun culture and in a society that knows little of the practices of reconciliation, yet it is fundamental to authentic discipleship.

Vs 42: CCC 2443 Giving to the poor and needy demonstrates our love for Christ.

Vss. 43-44: CCC 1933, 2848 This first citation should be read carefully in light of reconciliation. Secondly God is appeased by the prayer of the person who makes peace, according to St. Cyprian. Divine forgiveness is boundless.

Vss. 44-45: CCC 2303, 2608 “Deliberate hatred is contrary to charity.” One can never wish grave harm on a neighbor or enemy.

Vs. 44: CCC 1825, 1968, 2262 To understand charity, the Church points us to I Corinthians 13. Jesus perfects the Law of the Torah by an inner “reform of the heart.” Putting aside revenge, we keep the 5th Commandment.

Vs. 45: CCC 2828 The Catechism uses this verse to explain “Give us this day . . .” in the Lord’s Prayer.

Vss. 46-47: CCC 2045 The Church is built up by the growth in holiness of each member.

Vs. 47: CCC 1693 This citation points us in the direction of evangelization by words and actions to all.

Vs. 48: CCC 443, 1693, 1968, 2013, 2842 In #443, we are taught that the sonship of Jesus is in a different relationship from ours as disciples to the Father, yet we are God’s children, but not as the Trinity. Take #2013 to mean that every disciple from the pope to the person in the back pew, is called to the same holiness of life. Holiness of life does not depend on one’s station in life. Commenting on the meaning of the “as we forgive”, the Catechism emphasizes the infinite scope of God’s love.

<p>KNOW YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>What are we taught about revenge in the work of reconciliation?</p> <p>St Thomas Aquinas taught: “To love means to will the good of the other.” Relate this to the gospel.</p>
<p>LIVE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>How can I be a peacemaker right now where I am?</p> <p>Why is human revenge so compelling to us?</p>
<p>SHARE YOUR FAITH</p>	<p>In light of all the readings, what is our evangelical response to de-churched or un-churched Catholics?</p> <p>How do you share with others the fact that we are called to be all children of God?</p>

WORSHIP

Why does Jesus teach us to pray “our” Father?

Name a time that the Liturgical Assembly, the first meaning of Church, is most alive and present for you.

Gospel

Next Sunday: OT 8 A: Isaiah 49, 14-15; Psalm 62; I Corinthians 4, 1-5; Matthew 6, 24-34