

[74] **SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME** **A**

FIRST READING

You must love your neighbor as yourself.

A reading from the book of Leviticus

19:1-2, 17-18

The Lord told Moses to say to all of the people of Israel:

Keep yourselves holy.
I am the Lord your God, and I am holy.

Don't secretly hate someone.

Correct anyone who does wrong,
and you won't be guilty of that person's sin.

Don't try to get even.
And don't hold grudges.
You must love others as much as you love yourself.
I am the Lord your God.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

103:1-2, 3 and 13

R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.

With all my heart
I praise the Lord,
and with all that I am
I praise his holy name!
With all my heart
I praise the Lord!
I will never forget
how kind he has been.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

The Lord forgives our sins,
heals us when we are sick.
Just as parents are kind

to their children,
the Lord is kind
to all who worship him.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

SECOND READING

Do not fool yourselves.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

3:18-20

Brothers and sister:

Don't fool yourselves!
If any of you think you are wise in the things of this world,
you will have to become foolish before you can be truly wise.
This is because God considers the wisdom of this world to be foolish.

It is just as the Scriptures say,
"God catches the wise when they try to outsmart him."
The Scriptures also say,
"The Lord knows that the plans made by wise people are useless."

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

1 John 2:5

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Whoever keeps the word of Christ,
grows perfect in the love of God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Love your enemies.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

5:38-48

Jesus said to his disciples:

“You know that you have been taught,
‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’
But I tell you not to try to get even
with a person who has done something to you.

“When someone slaps your right cheek,
turn and let that person slap your other cheek.
If someone sues you for your shirt,
give up your coat as well.
If a soldier forces you to carry his pack one mile,
carry it two miles.
When people ask you for something,
give it to them.
When they want to borrow money,
loan it to them.

“You have heard people say,
‘Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.’
But I tell you to love your enemies
and pray for anyone who mistreats you.
Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven.

“He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people.
And he sends rain for the ones who do right
and for the ones who do wrong.

“If you love only those people who love you,
will God reward you for that?
Even tax collectors love their friends.
If you greet only your friends,
what’s so great about that?
Don’t even unbelievers do that?
But you must always act like your Father in heaven.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle A

Prayer:

Dear God,
Please help me to be nice to everyone.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

Readings:

Leviticus	19:1-2, 17-18
Psalm	103:1-2, 3 and 13
First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians	3:18-20
Matthew	5:38-48

Reflection

Last week we celebrated Valentine's Day. It is a time when we tell friends and family how much we love them. We concentrate on the warm fuzzy feelings we have for certain people. It is often a fun time when we are happy and feeling good.

Love has many different sides to it. It is not only that warm fuzzy feeling but is also an action word which is the most important aspect of it. To love someone means doing something to make their lives better and to make them happy. This can be really hard especially when it is for someone we don't particularly like or who we think is not a nice person. It can also be hard when it is not something we want to do or like to do. God is teaching us today that it is really important to do this. In the first reading we are told to "love our neighbors as ourselves," in the Gospel, "love our enemies," and in the psalm we learn that "The Lord is kind." We know that God loves everyone and we know that God wants us to act as God does and to love everyone, too. That does not mean to have a warm fuzzy feeling for everyone. It means that we are to do things to help others and to make them happy. Not only does this mean we need to do things but to also NOT do things that make others sad such as talking about them behind their backs saying mean things about them. We would not want others to do that to us so we should not do it to anyone either. God wants us to be nice/kind to everyone. We need to remember that we don't know everything that is going on in a person's life or what they are thinking and feeling. In addition to being nice to everyone, helping everyone, we should also pray for everyone.

Discussion

1. Can you think of someone in your class, in your neighborhood or even in your family who many people don't seem to like, either because they are different or because they are mean? (Ask them to describe that person without using names or anything that will identify them)
2. Try to imagine you are that person –
 - a. How do you feel when others don't invite you to play or sit with them at lunch?
 - b. How do you feel when you hear others saying mean things about you?
 - c. How do you feel when others are mean to you?
3. How does God want us to treat those people?

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Activity: Post Valentine's Day Valentines

Materials needed: A package of large valentines (you should be able to find them for clearance prices after Valentine's Day), or cut-out hearts on red or pink paper, writing or drawing supplies.

Instructions:

Ask the class to make valentines for people who don't normally get a lot of valentines. Instruct them to not only sign their name but to also write or draw something on the valentine telling the person something good that they notice about them or appreciate in them.