



The Enduring Validity of the Law

The early Christian communities struggled with the question of their relationship with the law as they entered the new era inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The evangelist Matthew tried to settle this issue for his own community by showing them how Jesus viewed the law and understood his role in relation to it.

In his inaugural address, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly defines his relationship with the law—“I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.” Thus, he affirms the law’s enduring validity for Christians in every age.

The essence of the law is love. The original intention of the Lawgiver is to lead his covenant-partner Israel into a loving relationship with him, with their fellow human beings, and with the rest of creation. But like an ancient painter’s original masterpiece that passed from one patron to another and was retouched by other hands and overlaid with paint and dust, the original intention of the Lawgiver was obscured by the way it had been interpreted by the so-called experts of the law—the scribes and the Pharisees. Their meticulous analysis of words and formulations locked up the spirit of the law, so that its intended meaning was kept



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beyond the reach of ordinary people. Thus, obedience to the law, as interpreted by these law experts, was reduced to mere compliance with the letter of the law and attention to little details, often to the neglect of what was essential. Yet they held the illusion that such manner of obeying the law led to righteousness.

Jesus comes from the Lawgiver and knows fully the Lawgiver’s intention. He alone can pierce through the letter and formulation of the law and reveal its divinely intended meaning. Thus, he presents himself as the ultimate authority and definitive interpreter of the law. The role of Jesus can be likened to that of the restorer of the ancient painter’s masterpiece—the one who will remove the layers of paint and dust and dirt covering the original work to allow its pristine beauty to emerge. “I have

come not to abolish but to fulfill.” The implication of this pronouncement is great, for it affirms that God does not contradict himself—giving the law at one time then sending somebody to abolish it at another time. God’s intention is consistent from the beginning. The law traces out the path of love and fidelity for his covenant-partner Israel.

The claim of Jesus “not to abolish but to fulfill” is strategically placed by Matthew before the series of contrasts that come in verses 21–48—“you have heard... but I say to you...”—in order to dispel any misconception that Jesus is putting himself in opposition to the law rather than setting its spirit free from imprisonment in the letter. This spirit, which is love, is placed at the heart of the redefined commandments. Their radically intensified formulation by Jesus points to the new kind of righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Jesus, the Messiah, is the final goal of the whole law. In his life, teaching, passion, death, and resurrection, he embodies the fulfillment of the law and opens the floodgates of grace that will enable believers to live righteous lives and be admitted into the heavenly kingdom.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 31 [30]:3–4)

(Recited when there is no opening song)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—Jesus tells us today that mere external observance of God's law does not make us his true followers. Our observance of the divine law must spring from inner conviction. May our Eucharistic celebration make us grow in love, a love that is free, responsible, and self-giving.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(Strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

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, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Sir 15:15–20) *(Sit)*

Sirach tells us that we are free to choose between a life of faithfulness and a life of sin. But God, who knows everything, has prepared life for the virtuous and death for sinners.

A reading from the Book of Sirach

IF you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too shall live; he has set before you fire and water to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him. Immense is the wisdom of the

Lord; he is mighty in power, and all-seeing. The eyes of God are on those who fear him; he understands man's every deed. No one does he command to act unjustly, to none does he give license to sin.

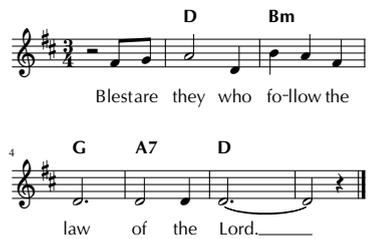
—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 119)

R—Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

E.J. Reyes, ssp



1. Blessed are they whose way is blameless,/ who walk in the law of the LORD./ Blessed are they who observe his decrees,/ who seek him with all their heart. **(R)**

2. You have commanded that your precepts/ be diligently kept./ Oh, that I might be firm in the ways/ of keeping your statutes! **(R)**

3. Be good to your servant, that I may live/ and keep your words./ Open my eyes, that I may consider/ the wonders of your law. **(R)**

4. Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes,/ that I may exactly observe them./ Give me discernment, that I may observe your law/ and keep it with all my heart. **(R)**

Second Reading (1 Cor 2:6–10)

The wisdom of God is his loving plan to save us through Jesus. It is the wisdom that proclaims the salvific merit of the cross of Christ.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of

this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him, this God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

—The word of the Lord.

All —Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Cf. Mt 11:25) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 5:17–37) *(Long Form)*

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to his disciples: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry

with brother will be liable to judgment; and whoever says to brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

"You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

"It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife—unless the marriage is unlawful—causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

"Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow. But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you

cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one."

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Profession of Faith *(Stand)*

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Brothers and sisters, through the Holy Spirit, let us ask the Father the grace to discern his will and the mysteries of the Kingdom. Full of trust, we pray:

R—Loving God, hear our prayer.

C—Help our Church leaders soundly discern the movement of your Spirit in the world we are in. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our national and local leaders, and the citizenry, see you in the face of each other so that we may treat each other with dignity. We pray: **(R)**

C—Help all families manifest your goodness as parents, children, and siblings strive to be loving to each other. We pray: **(R)**

C—Welcome our departed loved ones into the heavenly kingdom. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—Eternal God, hear our plea as we strive to discern the mysteries of the Kingdom which you have lovingly revealed to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

**LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST**



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...
All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P— May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward.
Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface *(Ordinary Time VIII)*

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.
P—Lift up your hearts.
All—We lift them up to the Lord.
P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All—It is right and just.



JOURNEYS OF FAITH *SETTING THE GOLD STANDARD
IN PILGRIMAGES*

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULES

JOURNEYS TO THE LAND OF THE BIBLE (Apr 18 - May 1, 2023)
Egypt-Israel-Jordan with Fr. Jigs Rosalinda

ADRIATIC COAST WITH MEDJUGORJE (Apr 22 - May 5, 2023)
Austria - Slovenia - Bosnia Hercegovina - Croatia - Montenegro
with Fr. Herbie Santos

ICONIC AND RELIGIOUS ITALY (May 6 - 16, 2023)
Italy with Fr. Ricky Montanez A.A.

JOURNEYING TO EUROPE'S MARIAN SHRINES (May 6 - 23, 2023)
Portugal - Spain - France - Switzerland - Italy
with Fr. Bong Tupino

A MARIAN FAITH & FUN JOURNEY (Jun 15 - Jul 2, 2023)
Portugal - Spain - France - Italy
with Fr. Godwin Tatlonghari

CONTACT US FOR FULL DETAILS AND SCHEDULES.

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P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit, you gathered them again to yourself, that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church.

And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—Save us savior of the world for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free!

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...
P—Deliver us, Lord...
All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...
All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(Cf. Ps 78 [77]:29-30)

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. (*Pause*)
Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, that we may always long for that food by which we truly live.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Final Blessing

P—May Almighty God bless you all the Father, the Son (+), and the Holy Spirit.
All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life.
All—Thanks be to God.