



# LIVING THE GOSPEL

**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025**

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**Theme: "But love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you"**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, always pondering spiritual things, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is 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. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 6:27-38**

<sup>27</sup>"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your cloak do not withhold your coat as well. <sup>30</sup> Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. <sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.<sup>33</sup>And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.<sup>35</sup>but love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, he and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup>"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;<sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

### **Gospel Focus**

Even when we are familiar with these words, this gospel contains some of Jesus' hardest teachings. It goes against our hardwired self-protective instincts to love enemies and to do good to those who wish us ill. When we are struck, our nervous system tells us to fight or flee—and with good reason. God made us this way so that we can avoid harm. Jesus tells us, though, to rise above these reflexes and to choose a supernatural path, one we can only hope to achieve with his help. We might fear that such instructions will let us be taken advantage of, and that is true: at no point does Jesus promise that we will not be taken advantage of in this world. He calls us not to self-preservation but to live with the radical love and generosity that he will model when he washes his disciples' feet and ultimately lays down his very life for us.

## **Gospel Reflection**

The expression “you have to learn to give as good as you get” in American idiom refers to the ability to hold your own in a group of strong-willed people. Sometimes parents say it to their children to encourage them to stand up to bullies. What “you get” is thought to be something challenging or difficult. In today’s gospel, the meaning is just the opposite. What we get from the Divine Giver is overflowing abundance of compassion, pardon, and love. Among a people who have struggled to have enough food, to be given an overflowing measure of grain is an image of the Creator’s care and providence. How is one to respond to the unearned gift of God’s gracious mercy? The gospel gives the answer: by emulating the One whose child we are.

Jesus spells out some of the ways that God’s children do as God does: loving enemies, doing good to those who do hateful things, blessing those who speak abusively, and praying for such people. This manner of acting is not unique to Jesus. The first reading also gives an example of how not to return evil for evil. David chooses not to harm Saul, even though King Saul had been trying to kill David.

Beyond individual actions of nonretaliation, Jesus invites his followers into a fundamental stance in life so that our lives reflect the image of the One who made us. By continually opening ourselves to the immeasurable goodness, compassion, and love of the Most High, our puny capacities are stretched and extended. The more we become conscious of how much we graciously receive, the more our measure for giving to others increases.

Such life stance demands relinquishing what is our natural reaction to want to return in kind what we get. If someone strikes us, our instinct is to hit back. If someone speaks unkindly of us, our urge is to match the ugly words with even more hurtful ones. If something is taken from us, we want repayment with interest. Measure for measure, and then some—that is what we instinctively seek. However, Jesus points out that when evil is returned for evil, all it does is increase the measure of evil in the world. Metering out goodness, compassion, pardon—especially when that is contrary to what is directed toward us—subdues and transforms evil. It ruptures the powers of evil and redirects energy toward filling the world with gracious mercy.

The final verses in the gospel may at first seem to say that we will be treated by God the way we treat others. However, the 2 previous verses (verses 35 and 36) give us as the starting point of God unearned goodness and mercy toward us. What enables us to be compassionate, non-judgmental, forgiving, and giving is that God has first been that way with us. Such divine action in us then shapes our ability to measure the way God does.

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — 1 Sam 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23**

<sup>2</sup> In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. <sup>7</sup> So David and Abishai went among Saul’s soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

<sup>8</sup> Abishai whispered to David: “God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!” <sup>9</sup> But David said to Abishai, “Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the Lord’s anointed and remain unpunished?” <sup>12</sup> So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul’s head, and they got away without anyone’s seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the Lord had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope, <sup>13</sup> David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. <sup>22</sup> He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. <sup>23</sup> The Lord will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the Lord delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the Lord's anointed."

### **Responsorial Reading — Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13**

**R: "The Lord is kind and merciful."**

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. **(R)**

He pardons all your iniquities, heals all your ills. He redeems your life from destruction, crowns you with kindness and compassion. **(R)**

Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes. **(R)**

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. **(R)**

### **Second Reading — 1 Cor 15:45-49**

Brothers and sisters: It is written, <sup>45</sup> The first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

## **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**1458.** Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.<sup>59</sup> Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as he is merciful:<sup>60</sup>

Whoever confesses his sins . . . is already working with God. God indicts your sins; if you also indict them, you are joined with God. Man and sinner are, so to speak, two realities: when you hear "man" - this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner" - this is what man himself has made. Destroy what you have made, so that God may save what he has made. . . . When you begin to abhor what you have made, it is then that your good works are beginning, since you are accusing yourself of your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works. You do the truth and come to the light.<sup>61</sup>

**1669.** Sacramentals derive from the baptismal priesthood: every baptized person is called to be a "blessing," and to bless.<sup>174</sup> Hence lay people may preside at certain blessings; the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained ministry (bishops, priests, or deacons).<sup>175</sup>

**1970.** The Law of the Gospel requires us to make the decisive choice between "the two ways" and to put into practice the words of the Lord.<sup>26</sup> It is summed up in the *Golden Rule*, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets."<sup>27</sup>

The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the "*new commandment*" of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us.<sup>28</sup>

**2842.** This "as" is not unique in Jesus' teaching: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."<sup>139</sup> It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make "ours" the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.<sup>140</sup> Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave" us.<sup>141</sup>

### **Sharing and Discussio,**

- 1.** How does today's lessons in the gospel, reflect the nature and character of God? What is your personal view of God?
- 2.** In the gospel Jesus tells us to be "merciful, just as your Father is merciful." How would you define God's mercy and how do we exercise this command of being merciful in our daily life?
- 3.** "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." How can prayer help in transforming our hearts toward those you struggle to love? What role does humility play in loving?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** Lord God, you have given us a new commandment to love one another as you have loved us. Hear our prayers this day and grant us fortitude to grow in mercy. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

**All:** Amen.

**Living The Gospel bible study/sharing via Zoom.  
Every Wednesday  
Time: 8 – 9.30 pm**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2760073734?pwd=cDRZR2JQMGRobVkwY3ZVF5L1BwZz09>**

**Meeting ID: 276 007 3734  
Passcode: 1WordOfGod**

**All are welcome!**

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**References:**

- (1) Gospel Notes are taken from The Navarre Bible
- (2) Gospel Reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sundays and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Ministry, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota Reprinted with permission.
- (3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of The Catholic Church