

HOMILY for 6th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year A

This Sunday's readings discuss about the Commandments. Thinking about that message, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

A lawyer comes to visit his client on death row, & he says, "I have some good news for you."

And the client says, "What good news are you talking about? You lost my case, I was convicted of a murder I did not commit, & I been sentenced to die in the electric chair!"

The lawyer then says, "Yes, but I got the voltage lowered."

Anyhow, Ten Commandments are the most revered & talked-about set of laws in the human history. These moral laws were supposedly given to Moses from God to help guide the people of God after their flight out of Egypt. They did not have to worry about law & order when they were in slavery. But, once they had found their freedom, they needed a way to build up a just & harmonious society. Ten Commandments are one of the best ways to achieve that goal. God also relied on those moral laws to keep the people of God following God's way & the tradition of their forefathers. If they would do that, God promised to reward them with the possession of the land flowing with milk & honey. That land would help them build up a peaceful & harmonious society.

However, Ten Commandments were more than just the way to connect the people of God to their Jewish tradition & help them build up a just & harmonious society. For prophets & wise figures like Moses, those commandments were also the wonderful display of the wisdom of God. They examined & studied the commandments to figure out why God wanted to inscribe those laws in the hearts of the people of God. It has taken years for the people of God to realize the wisdom of God behind the Ten Commandments. Sometimes they might not even see the benefits of following those commandments in their lives. To help us see the wisdom of God behind the Ten Commandments, today's First Reading has this message to share with us: "If you choose, you can keep the Commandments; it is loyalty to do His will.... Before human are life & death, whichever someone chooses shall be given to that person. Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; He is mighty in power; & all seeing. The eyes of the Lord see all He has made; He understands one's every deed." As you can see, it's not only beneficial to follow the Ten Commandments. Prophet Sirach believed that it is also a matter of life & death. Their violators would face grave consequences that might destroy their lives. On the other hand, if we live up to those commandments, we would appreciate the wisdom of God behind them. For God could see all human deeds & would want to warn us about avoiding certain harmful acts. Because those acts would bring the offenders & others painful & deadly consequences. Prophet Sirach & other prophets considered the commandments as God's way to protect the people of God from all the harm & destruction in this life.

Many people think that Ten Commandments shackle & imprison them from a life of freedom & crazy choices. They want to do whatever they like without considering the consequences. They think that they do not have to be held accountable for their actions. A wise figure like Moses wanted to propose Ten Commandments as the best way to hold the people of God accountable for their actions while connecting them to their God. He considered Ten Commandments as the Covenant between God & the people of God. By following that covenant, the people of God would be able to be connected to God & find lots of wonderful

blessings in their life. They would first achieve a peaceful & prosperous life on earth & later an eternal life in the Kingdom of God. To highlight the importance of the commandments in our daily life, Jesus made this comment in this Sunday's Gospel, "Jesus said to His disciples: 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law & the prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Of this much, I assure you: until heaven & earth pass away, not the smallest letter of the law, not the smallest part of a letter, shall be done away with until it all comes true. That is why whoever breaks the least significant of these commands & teaches others to do so shall be called least in the Kingdom of God. Whoever fulfills & teaches these commands shall be great in Kingdom of God.'" So, Jesus wanted us to recognize the importance of laws & commandments for our life on earth as well as in the Kingdom of God. He reminded us that He came not to wipe out all the old laws begin new ones. Rather, His mission was to fulfill the long-awaited prophecy for the people of God.

We live in a time that loves to throw out old rules & laws & start new ones. Some people think that rules & laws clamp them down & keep them from living out their lives the way they want. They assume that most of the current laws are unfair to them & favorable to certain groups of people. That is why they advocate the idea of abolishing all the existing laws & creating new ones. The problem with that idea is that they do not realize how long it has taken the community to come up with the old laws. Moreover, any new law will have a good number of people who would object it. So, they would waste lots of time & effort to create new laws without much success. They would be better off fixing & improving old rules & laws to bring them a just & harmonious community. Otherwise, they would end up with a chaotic & lawless society.

My dear brothers & sisters, rules & laws are supposed to bring about a just & harmonious society. We Christians also believe that the commandments would link us to the wisdom of God & eventually lead us to the Kingdom of Heaven. Unfortunately, all human rules & laws are never perfect. But, we need to follow the laws & improve them if we want to have a fair & peaceful society & a place in the Kingdom of God someday.