

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Read and listen.

elist puts into Jesus' mouth a whole discourse  
that reveals the constant tension between Gospel and law,  
and that invites us to live and cultivate attitudes  
that go beyond the law  
and beyond social custom.

Read it attentively, allowing ourselves  
to be challenged, embracing its newness,  
exposing ourselves to its truth...

Florentino Ulibarri

### **Reading 1 Sirach 15:15-20**

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.

### **Responsorial Psalm Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34**

**R. (1b) Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!**

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.**

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

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**  
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.

### **Reading 2 1 Corinthians 2:6-10**

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.

**Gospel Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37**

Jesus said to his disciples:

"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 his brother  
will be liable to judgment.

"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.



"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.  
Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.'  
Anything more is from the evil one."

## THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS

It's not easy to listen to Jesus' call to forgiveness or to grasp the implications it can have when we accept that a person is more human when we forgive whenever it's needed.

Undoubtedly we need to understand well Jesus' thinking. To forgive doesn't mean ignoring injustices committed, or passively or indifferently accepting them. On the contrary, if we forgive it's precisely to destroy somehow the cycle of evil, and to help the other to rehabilitate themselves and act differently in the future.

In the dynamic of forgiveness there's a power to overcome evil with good. Forgiveness is a gesture that qualitatively changes the relationships among people and seeks to establish our future living together in a new way. That's why forgiveness mustn't be just an individual demand, but ought to have a social expression.

Society oughtn't abandon any person, not even the guilty ones. Each person has the right to be loved. We can't accept that repressive punishment only «returns evil for evil» for the imprisoned, burying them in their crime, degrading their existence and keeping them from their true rehabilitation.

The great juridical expert G. Radbruch understands that the punishment as imposition of evil for evil must go about disappearing in order to be changed as far as possible into «stimulus to redeem evil with good, the only way in which we can exercise in the world a justice that doesn't make things worse, but transforms them into a better world».

There's no justification for acting in a degrading or unjust manner with any prisoner, whether they're a common delinquent or a political prisoner. We will never advance toward a more human society if we don't abandon postures of repression, hate, and vengeance.

That's why it's also a mistake to incite people to revenge. The cry of «the people don't forgive» is disgracefully understandable, but isn't the clear path for teaching them to build a more human future.

The rejection of forgiveness is a cry that we as believers can't ever subscribe to, since definitely it's a rejection of the fraternity desired by the One who forgives us all.

**José Antonio Pagola**

**Translator: Fr. Jay VonHandorf**