

FAITH AND REASON

I give you a new commandment: Let us consider this great commandment by way of contrast: Hillel, one of the greatest Rabbis, when, asked about the Law answered: "What is hateful to you, do not do to another? Philo (30 b.c-40 a.d.) the great Jewish philosopher from Alexandria said: "what is hateful to you, do not do to another". Isocrates, the Greek orator said: "What things make you angry when you suffer them at the hands of others, do not to others". The Stoics had, as one of their basic rules: "What you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do to another". Confucius when asked, "Is there any word which may serve as a rule of practice for one's life? He answered, " is not reciprocity such a word"? What you do not want, done to yourself do not do to others."

Do not.... Do not.... Do not.... Do not... Do not There is nothing particularly wrong with the words "do not" They have their place in human discourse. But they do not give us very much to live by... they are clearly negative, "do not". Some will object, and correctly, and say "Are not the Ten commandments negative? Yes, indeed they are...but they are destined, to be fulfilled! "I have come not to abolish the Law but to fulfill the Law." This is clearly evident in the Gospel. It is clearly evident in the Sermon on the Mount, in CH 5-9 of St Mathews Gospel.

The love Jesus asks of his followers, is a love that only God could ask of us. such heroic love touches what is God-like in us, created as we are in God's image and makes us children of the Most High God. This did not go unnoticed by St Vincent de Paul who said something that is profoundly simple and also simply profound.... "Be kind, be kind, and you will become a Saint" This text is not a call to be a pacifist, to offer no resistance to wrong-doing. Rather, it is that unforgiving, vindictive, vengeful attitude that is to be avoided. The text calls for an open and generous spirit that is not blind to the needs of others. The Golden Rule as it is called comes from Lk 6:27-38. "Do to others as you would have them do to you".

Some people like to think they are as good as their neighbors. Other people like to think they are better than their neighbors. The concern of Jesus is, how much better we are than the ordinary person. It is not our neighbors with whom we must compare ourselves. Rather it is to God himself who has shown us how he wants us to live. The point implicit in Sacred Scripture may be stated very simply: "I am asking you to live in this way, because I want you to be like me; then you will truly be sons and daughters of your Heavenly Father. Forget your earthly standards, I rebuked Peter for thinking the way thinks and not as God thinks."

St Paul expresses this so beautifully in Romans 12:1-2: "Brothers, I beg you, through the mercy of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing, and perfect".

The world in which we live is going "from bad to worse": dishonesty, injustice, cruelty, immorality, are spreading like a plague. And there seems to be no end in sight. At this point I think of the Missionary in Rwanda who was so overcome by the savage, inhuman treatment of the poor, the elderly men, women and children, the killing of hundreds of thousands cried out, "There can be no devils in hell, they have all come to Rwanda."

Think of what is taking place in Western democracies - as they are called. The slaughter of the innocents, the neglect of the poor, the elderly, the sick in large cities, in dictatorships. There can be no doubt, the world is in a state of decline, it is going downhill. What will save us. First we must recognize that the power of darkness has and is corrupting the minds and hearts of people. Human nature itself could not be so blind, so reckless. Satan is winning campaigns without firing a shot. He has duped people into thinking that they are in charge of affairs, that they are determining the course of human affairs.

Is it possible to live the Gospel message in such a world by human ability alone? No! for it is against the "powers of darkness" that we do battle. Only by the grace of God can win this war! The Film Director Jean Jacques Arnaud said that the film "Quest for Fire" fulfilled a life-long dream. The film celebrates the discovery of fire which took place 80,000 years ago, a discovery which saved the human race from extinction.

An increasing number of people in the modern world, for a variety of reasons, fear that we are once again on the brink of extinction. One thing alone can save us: the rediscovery of love. Not the anemic, selfish form of love that has the individual person as its center, which is nothing less than selfishness in the name of love. But, love as revealed by Jesus - God incarnate!... **William C. Mooney**

A Pope's Prayer: Lead in truth, O Christ, the fathers and mothers of families in the Church, urged on and strengthened by the sacramental grace of marriage, and aware of being on earth, the visible sign of your unfailing love for the Church. Lead in truth, O Christ, the young people of the Church. Let them not be attracted by the new Idols, such as exaggerated consumerism, prosperity at all costs, moral permissiveness, protest expressed with violence. Rather let them live with the joy of your message, which is the message of the Beatitudes. Lead in truth O Christ, all the faithful of the Church. May we become before the world, courageous witnesses to your mission of salvation, happy to be sons and daughters of God - with you - and all humanity. Lead us in truth O Christ, Always! **Amen**

The Power of Confession: People talk about Christianity having burdened people with guilt and having tried to use this as a lever to oppress them. Well, of course, such a misuse of guilt feelings may occur. But it is worse to extinguish the capacity for recognizing, because man then becomes inwardly hardened and sick. Just think a stage further, to an intensified form of the inability to recognize guilt. The capacity to recognize guilt can be tolerated, and properly developed, whenever there is also healing. And healing, in turn, can only exist where there is absolution. Psychotherapy can indeed do a great deal to help us perceive defective conditions in the psychical structure, and to help us put them right, but it cannot overcome guilt. At that point it has passed beyond the limits of its capabilities, and that is why it so often fails. Only the sacrament, the authority from God, can truly overcome guilt. We must admit, in any case that in our individualistic age it has become enormously difficult for people to cross the threshold of personal confession. But where the spirit of faith is leading us, then it can learn anew. Above all because this is not an admission of guilt before men, but before God, and because it ends with the word of forgiveness and perhaps also with advice that will help us to overcome the after-effects of Guilt. **Pope Benedict XVI**

The Joy of Finding God: Lord, you have already announced in a loud voice deep inside me that you do exist and have always existed and that you will live forever always the same, never now this way and then that. You have announced in a loud voice deep inside me that you have made everything that is. The only things that are not yours are those things that simply are not, and (of course) the perversity of my will which sometimes chooses to run away from you and to latch on to something immeasurably lower. Perversity is all mine... It does no damage to you. This I see clearly now because of the sight you have given me. Make my vision ever more clear as I continue to be touched by the wonders you reveal and live out my life quietly here under your shielding wings.

A Thought For the Day

Sunday	The sufficiency of my merit is to know that my merit is not sufficient.
Monday	We know God easily if we do not constrain ourselves to define Him.
Tuesday	It is right to be contented with what we love, never with what we are.
Wednesday	Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who speak badly.
Thursday	Minds are not conquered by force but by love and good example.
Friday	Woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young, to believe, to hope, to love - and to put his trust in life.
Saturday	You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy.

Take Time..... Irish Sayings: Take time to look around - the day is too short to be selfish. Take time to play - it is the secret of perpetual growth. Take time to read - it is the foundation of wisdom. Take time to be friendly - it is the road to happiness. Take time to dream - it is hitching your wagon to a star. Take time to love and be loved - it is the privilege of the Gods. Gods time to laugh - it is the music of the soul.

Love your Neighbor: God put the commandment of loving our neighbor on the same footing as the first commandment. God's love is infinite. God has prepared us for service, so he expects this from us. He has given each of us something that in one way or another will enable him to shine through us. **Mother Teresa**

Just for Today: Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime. Just for today I will be happy: Most are happy as they make up their minds to be. Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes and fit myself to it. Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study, I will learn something, I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration. Just for today. I will do somebody a good turn; I will not show that my feelings have been hurt. They may hurt but today I will not show it. Just for today I will dress becomingly, keep my voice low, act courteously, refrain from fault-finding, and concentrate on improving myself. Just for today I will have a program, I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. This will save me from two pests, haste and indecision. Just for today I will have a quiet hour for myself and relax. Sometime during this hour, I will try to get a better perspective on my life. Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not hesitate to enjoy what is beautiful and good, and believe that as I give to the world, so will the world give to me.

In His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

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