

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Feb.24 2019.

THEME: REVENGE

Introduction

The teachings of Jesus sometimes come across as impractical in today's world, even if we allow for Semitic exaggeration. The extract we have heard from St Luke's gospel today, is a case in point: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you". –Our natural instinct is to give, as good,- as I get. If someone has done me harm, - the baser side of my nature will want "revenge". - My road to revenge leads to backlash, - and so the cycle becomes a vicious circle, often of my own making.- Unfortunately, this is a scenario I may find between me, and my neighbor, even between me, and members of my own family. Transfer that dynamic to communities,- or nations,- and the result is war in its many ugly disguises. -The longer these disputes ,last,-the harder it is for me to find a peaceful solution. The term we find in Scripture is apt:--"hardness of heart".

Some people are willing to pay enormous sums of money to acquire treatment for psychological damage which results from conflict .Peace of mind does not have a price... And yet,- the solution is, in the teaching of Jesus in today's gospel, "Love your enemies... do good to those who hate you". Not only does he tell me what to do... but he gives me the means necessary to achieve it. His own gift of forgiveness is available to me , ... and I need to claim it. It sounds simple; is it too good to be true? How can I be sure it will work? The answer lies in the fact that I have been created in the image and likeness of God. (GEN.1:26) That is not a pious platitude but, rather, a truth that gives me a whole new way of living my life.

The RESPONSORIAL PSALM ,today says to me "The Lord is compassion and love". If I am created in God's image, -- then I am capable of "compassion and love" for myself and others around me, even to heroic propotions.

Look at it this way: God gives me forgiveness in a very tangible way in the Sacrament of Confession. – In the Sacrament of Confession, and by the way, Fr. John goes to Confession like everybody else, here, and given half a chance, he can

sin as good as the rest of us, - CHRIST says to me: I am giving to you My Gift of Forgiveness: Waste as much of my gift of forgiveness to you on yourself as is humanly possible. Forgiveness of myself, -- from within myself,-- is my primary responsibility,- in my life.- Nobody else! We all have our own skeletons in my own closets, -- haunting me. If I PERMIT them! Stop beating yourself up, -- because of the wrong things I have done in my past life-. I am ashamed of them .They are my dark secrets. I am sometimes scared stiff, somebody - will find me out !!

Here, the Latin language,-- the mother-tongue, of MOTHER- CHURCH,-and the Mother-- of all the Germanic Languages, -- comes into “play”, -is at its most expressive best .. The Latin says: “NEMO – NON- QUAD- NON- HABET” which translated means “I, -- cannot give, -- what I - have not got...”In other words . ALL- Forgiveness, - by its very nature, -- Always...Always...flows from within “ OUTWARDS” ..never ...” INWARDS.” If I don’t forgive myself, how can I share forgiveness with others in my life.

Many of you are familiar with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We celebrate Guadalupe every year Dec.8 . But how many know the back story Of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, DEC. 12<sup>th</sup>.—Briefly,- “THE BACK STORY”- is this! In the tiny Mexican Village, called, - TEPYAC, - lived,- a Mexican Peasant , named,- Juan DIEGO. – In one of the VISIONS,- MARY told,- JUAN DIEGO GO , - to go to YOUR Local Bishop, and tell him everything what,- “OUR Lady Said”. The Bishop, flatly refused to believe anything ,- Juan Diego said. So after a lot of back and forth, the Bishop skeptically, said, to Juan Diego,“ Ask the Lady, to ask her Son; what sins has the Bishop committed?- During the next vision, Juan Diego asked Our Lady,--“ the Bishop asked me,- to ask your Son: what sins has the Bishop committed?

Juan Diego,MARY SAID:” Tell the Bishop: “My Son has forgotten,- the BISHOP’S SINS”.

So intense is God’s love for me.—The Famous, St. Augustine,- Son of ST. Monica,- who prayed ever day , that her wayward Son would mend “his ways” wrote in his Trilogy of Books,-- entitled,-“ TRUE CONFESSIONS”,- the famous words: “LOVE ME LORD,..BUT NOT JUST YET...”

OR

AGAIN,- Augustine,- reflecting over his past life, of debauchery ,on the intense love of God for ME, in his life said;”What a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the loving God”,-so deep is God’s love “FOR ME”.

OR

The most Famous quote,- again, from ST. Augustine: “My Heart is ever Restless, until it RESTS in you,-“ MY GOD”. AMEN.