

**Reading 1:** Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 103:1-4,8,10,12-13

**Reading 2:** First Corinthians 3: 16-23**Gospel**

: Matthew 5:38-48

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 5:38-48

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Meditation:**

Jesus approached the question of just retribution with a surprising revelation of God's intention for how we should treat others, especially those who mistreat us. When Jesus spoke about God's law, he did something no one had done before. He gave a new standard based not just on the requirements of justice - giving each their due - but based on the law of grace, love, and freedom.

**Law of grace and love** Jesus knew the moral law and its intention better than any jurist or legal expert could imagine.

He quoted from the oldest recorded law in the world: If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe .

**Grace of the Holy Spirit** What makes a disciple of Jesus Christ different from everyone else? What makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is grace - treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated - with loving-kindness and mercy. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. The Lord Jesus suffered insult, abuse, injustice, and death on a cross for our sake. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm or ill-will? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who believe and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. His love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and griefs. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. Do you know the power and freedom of Christ's redeeming love and mercy?

**Perfect - made whole**

Was Jesus exaggerating when he said we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect? Jesus' command seems to parallel two passages from the Old Testament Scriptures. The first is where God instructed Abraham to "be perfect/blameless" before God.

**Freedom and power to love as God loves.** God knows our sinfulness and weaknesses better than we do - and he assures us of his love, mercy, and help. That is why he freely gives us his power, strength, and gifts so that we may not lack anything we need to do his will and to live as his sons and daughters. Ask the Holy Spirit to purify and transform you in the image of the Father that you may know and live in the joy and freedom of the Gospel.

**Questions for Community Faith Sharing:**

- If someone insults you or tries to take advantage of you, how do you respond? Do you repay in kind?
2. What do you understand about "power " and "freedom " of Christ's redeeming love and mercy?
  3. How have you grown in your love of God and neighbour?

"Lord Jesus, your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart ablaze with your love that nothing may make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make me bitter towards anyone."