

Father Bradley Neely
15th Sunday Ordinary Time
Spps: Jul 11, 2010
Deut 30: 10-14; Col 1: 15-20; Lk 10: 25-37

Moses is mentioned in our first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy. I don't know how many of you know this, but when Moses got to the Red Sea, he decided to call a staff meeting (no pun intended)... So he chose the wisest Israelites to come forward to ask for ideas on how to cross the water. One old general suggested building a pontoon bridge, but Moses said there was no time. Another person suggested building rafts, but no time for that either. Finally, the Public Relations spokesman for Moses stood up, and Moses got all excited, "You've got a plan?" "Not really", the spokesperson said, "but if you do manage to pull this off, I can promise you some great coverage in the Old Testament!"

They did get through the sea, and Moses did get a lot of coverage in the Old Testament! Now later, on Mt Sinai, God made a Covenant with the nation of Israel, through Moses, which included the Ten Commandments. This was in the 15th century before Christ. Moses, as noted in the Book of Deuteronomy today, is concerned to show the Israelites that the *law is not something...remote—or inaccessible..*

It is not something just *out there*. It should be in our mouth and heart as a dynamic principle of life. The Law, by its very nature is something to be put into concrete practice. Law is not beyond our power.

Christ---God who become flesh for the purpose of our redemption, did not abolish the law of Moses, but made it *fuller*, and this fullness was to include all people of the earth *with* Israel.

The lawyer in the Gospel asks Christ about what he must do to attain eternal life.

Jesus replies that if one observes the law of love for God and neighbor, they will have life therefrom. This, of course, is the New Testament Commandment of love. So, Christ explains that the attainment of eternal life is bound up with the *concrete fulfillment* of the twofold commandment of love for God and neighbor.

Just as the law of Moses was a dynamic in the life of the Israelites, Christianity, also, has within it a dynamic. It is the *dynamic* practice of **love** for God and neighbor. This practice of love is the *direct proof* we can give the world that our faith is living and powerful. People can certainly tell if we are hypocrites. So, rather, we show the world Christianity by our lived example. And the practice of love is *concrete*. [Notice I am using the verb "practice." This love is not withheld until one *feels like* letting it out].

To rise to the dynamic practice of love, we must pray. As Catholic Christians, if our prayer and contemplation does not lead us to deepen our love for God as expressed in our mouth and heart, then we are really ineffective for the life of the Church---we do not carry any influence in the lives of those around us.

Now Jesus, in the Gospel, gives us an example of the man who was robbed and beaten and left for dead. A priest and a member of the national of Israel passed the man by. In the Jewish culture, they would have been made "unclean" by assisting the victim. A foreigner, a Samaritan, stopped and assisted. I just mentioned that Mosaic law was raised to a "fuller" level with Christ. As this example shows us, the fuller measure of the New Testament Commandment of love

now includes mercy and compassion,
as shown by the Samaritan.

If we pray and seek God,
but don't help someone we could help,
then what does that say about us?

“What is it about the Gospel that we don't get?”

The parable of the Good Samaritan is pretty obvious---
but we must remember
that this is not just a story
about some other people.
It is a story about us.
[a side note---in this day and age,
we DO need to be safe ourselves
in assisting someone else]

Prayer feeds out lips and our heart.
Our prayer should help us enter
more and more deeply
into the New Testament commandment of love,
and by association--how Christ looks at life.
Prayer takes us purposely into “the mind of God.”
For those who do not make the time to pray,
remember the example I used a while back
about a husband and wife
who never communicate, or at best,
do so only one hour a week---
maybe an hour on a Sunday morning.
If we rarely or never communicate with Jesus,
what chances does the relationship have to grow?
It is through prayer
that we become sensitive to those in need,
because, again, we slowly take on the mind of God.

Another essential for
the New Testament Commandment of love
is found via the truths that St. Paul heralds
in our 2nd reading today.
In his excitement at greeting the Colossians,
he proclaims the *truths of Jesus*
as * the image of the invisible God,
*Creator of all things in heaven and earth,
*One who is before all things,
*Who is head of the body—the Church,
*in Whom the fullness resides
*through Whom all things are reconciled,
*and Maker of Peace by the blood of His Cross.

We have been given full access
to the fullness of Christ,
who is all these things,
every time we receive a sacrament.
Reverently receiving the sacraments

should spur us to action
in the New Testament Commandment,
and spur us on to constant renewal.
We must be willing to be re-created by Christ,
in his Body the Church,
in the way He wishes.

So as the Old Testament Commandments
given to Moses
are not out of reach---
not inaccessible---
neither is the New Testament Commandment of Love.
For those who give themselves freely to God,
all of God's directives are possible.