



Bringing Home the Word

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

August 16, 2020

A Chosen People, a Common Ancestry

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Today's readings have a common theme: how Jesus' words to his Jewish brothers and sisters influence our faith.

The Catholic Church's relationship with our Jewish brothers and sisters has been strengthened dramatically over the last years. This is thanks in large part to Vatican II's Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), particularly Judaism.

Our deep connection with Judaism is rooted in the fact that God offered the Old Covenant to these Chosen People.

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Them I will bring to my holy mountain / and make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.

Matthew 15:21-28

[Jesus] said..., "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

We are also indebted to them because their history and culture formed the lives of the people of God and the Holy Family, from which the early Church sprung.

Christianity's firm belief that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah is the reason our Church is like a shoot sprung from the root of Jesse. This difference was something Paul's Letter to the Romans dealt with directly—the need for all, both Jews and Gentiles, to accept Jesus.

The key element to this acceptance is the faith shown in the Gospels. Jesus reaches out to his fellow members of the house of Judah yet also recognizes that a Canaanite (Gentile) woman has faith that leads to salvation. This has key implications for both insiders and outsiders: One can no longer claim salvation by a bloodline or nationality but only by one's acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God and active participation in his body, the Church. Jesus broadens the welcome and opens God's house to all people. +

**St. Paul states the need for
all—Jews and Gentiles—
to accept Jesus.**

A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus shows a particular predilection for those who are wounded in body and in spirit: the poor, the sinners, the possessed, the sick, the marginalized. Thus, he reveals himself as a doctor both of souls and of bodies, the good Samaritan of man. He is the true Savior: Jesus saves, Jesus cures, Jesus heals.

Angelus, February 8, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How can you become more united with your ancestors in faith?
- How can you strengthen ties with your Christ family?

The Seventh Commandment and Hidden Forms of Theft

By Kathy Coffey

"You shall not steal."
Exodus 20:15

We might think, "Whew! Got off easy on that one!" We law-abiding sorts don't pilfer office supplies, skim from the collection plate, shoplift, or rob banks. At last, this is one commandment we're handily observing, right?

Right—if we stick to the letter of the law. But the commandments are demanding, calling us beyond superficial observance. There are more forms of stealing than we might recognize. Let's look first at homegrown forms, then at the larger picture of social justice.

For example, we rob our families of hours together when we work overtime at jobs to buy more than necessities.

The Church has long taught that people created by God are too precious to be merely a means of profit. Our birthright gifts as God's children include dignity, security, the divine, transcendent love. So why do we hoard lesser things?

We steal a person's enthusiasm with negative comments. We quash plans that sound naïve to us, quell a child's creativity, stifle the initiative of a new employee. Unfounded fears can block imaginative solutions and worse—the inspiration of the Spirit.



Two forms of theft steal from the present: anxiety over the future or mulling about the past. Both rob the current moment of grace and potential.

It's Not Just About Us

The items in closets that don't fit or aren't worn—these too are stolen from those who could be using them, who might

actually be thrilled to have them. As St. Basil reminds us: "The coat in your closet belongs to the naked. The shoes rotting in your basement belong to the barefoot."

Our property and talents belong to us but were given by God for the benefit of others. Here again, our model is Christ, who "became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

A look through the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reveals social dimensions of this commandment, condemning: the payment of unjust wages, bribes to legislators, breaking a contract, and "work poorly done." Plus, discrimination against minorities, women, and immigrants—denying them job access—violates the Seventh Commandment.

How Las Vegas must tremble to hear the words, "The passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement" (CCC 2413). We may cringe at the busloads of people pumping their savings into slot machines.

So, too, people who lavish more money and attention on pets than some children receive aren't exercising proper stewardship: "One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons" (CCC 2418).

On a global scale, the arms race plunders the planet's resources, substituting weapons for basic needs. President Dwight D. Eisenhower prophetically warned in his 1961 farewell address that the military-industrial complex could sap our country's riches.

Paying Back

To conclude on a bright note, many people are making efforts at reparation. Corporate pollution may steal clean water and air, but it's heartening to think of the youth group at St. Edward the Confessor Parish in Richmond, VA. The kids sponsored a fast from every liquid but tap water and donated the money they would've spent to a project providing clean water in Nicaragua.

As Helen Keller said, "The world is full of suffering. It is full also of the overcoming of it." Those who repay the thefts occurring in homes and society honor the Seventh Commandment brilliantly. +



Lord, you offered the healing love and compassion of God to the sick and poor. Help me be an instrument of God's love and compassion to all people.

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 17–22

Monday, Weekday:
Ez 24:15–24 / Mt 19:16–22

Tuesday, Weekday:
Ez 28:1–10 / Mt 19:23–30

Wednesday, Weekday:
Ez 34:1–11 / Mt 20:1–16

Thursday, St. Bernard:
Ez 36:23–28 / Mt 22:1–14

Friday, St. Pius X:
Ez 37:1–14 / Mt 22:34–40

Saturday, Queenship of Blessed Virgin Mary:
Ez 43:1–7ab / Mt 23:1–12

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