

**7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - A 2020**  
**Lev. 19.1-2,17-18//1Cor. 3.16-23//Mt. 5.38-48**

→Late one night, a truck driver pulled into a roadside café for a little something to eat.

→as he was eating...three nasty-looking motorcyclists noisily strutted in and made their way to the bar.

→for some unknown reason they gravitated toward the truck driver

→one poured some salt on his head...another knocked his pie on the floor and the third managed to knock the trucker's coffee off the counter and into his lap.

→the truck driver got up....said nothing....paid his bill and made his exit.

→“that dude sure wasn't much of a fighter” sneered one of the cyclists

→the waiter peered out of the window onto the dark parking lot and said... “he's not much of a driver either...he just ran over three motorcycles.”

→sometimes...it gives joy to our hearts to see nasty people get paid back for their actions....and yet today....Jesus gives us a different way to look at things....

→as we grow older, one of the temptations we often have is to idealize the past

→we look back on our youth, or to some other period of history, and think of it as the best of times, or at least, a better time to have lived...

→and in some respect....this attitude is often perpetuated....in large part....due to television

→several times a day....news reports concentrate on the problems of the world and in a 30 minute time span all the problems of the day are set before us in living color.

→and so when you make a comparison, the world of yesterday seems like a much more stable and less dangerous place

→that is why reruns of old television shows are so popular

→people flock to watch weekly vintage programs such as "I Love Lucy," "Leave it to Beaver," "The Brady Bunch," "Happy Days," and so on.....because as we watch these shows, it is easy to get the impression that life in the 50's, 60's, and 70's was much better than today....

→my point is that many of us often try to hold onto...and idealize the past

→and in some instances we will spend a lot of energy trying to recapture the "good old days"

→well....in today's gospel reading... Jesus clearly states his attitude towards the past... because twice he says....."you have heard the commandment"...then he says..... "what I say to you now is this..."

i.o.w. he takes two old commandments and brings them forward and up-to-date

PAUSE

[and] both of these commandments that J. speaks about...are from the O.T. book of Leviticus

→the first said, "an eye for eye, tooth for a tooth" and it reality allowed a person to take revenge upon a another person when they were wronged

→if it sounds familiar it should...because that seems to be the thinking of many people today as well

yet what J. says now is " offer no resistance to injury" and then he takes it even a step further by saying....if someone strikes you on your right cheek...turn the other one as well...if

they take your tunic, give them your coat,...if you are pressed into service for one mile...go two

→I am sure it was difficult for the people of Jesus' time to hear those words...and I would imagine it is equally difficult for you and me to hear them today as well...especially when we live in such a time when everyone seems to be out for themselves these days.

→and the other commandment, also from Leviticus said ...."you shall love your neighbor, but hate your enemy" and J. changes that and says simply, "...love your enemies also..."

---again a very radical concept both at the time of Jesus...and just as radical still today [when you think about it]

→[after all] all of us care about our families and friends, members of own community, and those with a similar social standing.

→but what J. says is that ..."that is not enough...anyone can do that".....his lesson to the disciples and to you and me is to go beyond our little circle of comfort.....and be mindful and open to those who may not like us, or get along with us....

PAUSE

→i.o.w.....the main thrust of today`s gospel reading... is that J. is not about dwelling on the past and the status quo, but instead he about moving forward...AND pushing us to do the same

→J. was always seen as someone ahead of his time, someone who looked towards what could be, or might be..... rather than remaining trapped by what was

and maybe that is the challenge He gives to you and me today as well

PAUSE

→one of the unique qualities about the first disciples of Christ was that they pushed to become forward-looking group of people .....they dreamed their dreams of tomorrow, they thought in terms of a "new heaven and a new earth.

→they called their sacred book the New Testament

→and on every page of that book, you can hear them saluting the past, then leaving it behind, and turning their faces toward tomorrow

→they were convinced that the future belonged to Christ, and that Christ was not behind them, but in front of them

→in these times we live in....maybe we too might need to be convinced that Christ is not behind us but instead he is ahead of us

that our faith, and our life cannot be something that is lived out from the past, but instead it has to be something that is directed towards the future

→[and] maybe we too need to also realize that the future belongs to Christ

→that he is calling us towards that future..... rather than having us get bogged down with the past

→to recognize that He is not behind but rather in front of us

...and perhaps the best thing we can do..... is try to catch up with him.