

31B SML 2018  
MK 12:28b-34

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

What all encompassing, far reaching commandments. And since they are so all encompassing, and so far reaching, each and every one of is destined not to measure up. We're destined to fall short, hence the scribe mentioned burnt offerings and sacrifices, which were used to make man clean.

A fundamental concept of the religious tradition of the Old Testament and of world religions in general is if man is to enter God's presence, to have fellowship with God, he must be "clean." Yet the more he moves into the light, the more he moves toward God, the more he senses how defiled he is, and how much he stands in need of cleansing. Religions have therefore created systems of "purification," intended to make it possible for man to approach God.

In the cultic ordering of all religions, purification regulations play a major part: they give man a sense of the holiness of God and of his own darkness, from which he must be liberated if he is to be able to approach God. This system of cultic

purifications dominated the whole life of Judaism at the time of Jesus . . . because the burning question was and is today, “How does the heart become pure?” Who are the pure in heart, those who can see God, to paraphrase the popular beatitude?

Stated simply, Our Blessed Lord replaced the Old Testament’s entire system of cultic purification with forgiveness. By accepting His death on the cross for the forgiveness of sin, by letting ourselves be repeatedly cleansed, by simply confessing our sins to a priest, we are forgiven. Such a simple and easy way to be made clean.

Yet man has tried time and again to come up with better ways than the way offered to us by Our Blessed Lord, better ways than the forgiveness of sin.

First, deny there is such a thing as guilt. Start with the assumption you are responsible only for the good you do, but not the wrong. Insist on praise, recognition and honor for what you consider to be work well done, but attribute the evil in your life to either your mother or your father, the nuns in school or the kids on the bus.

Second, make yourself a judge of others. Once you deny guilt and sin, then proceed to find everyone else guilty. This will take your mind off the judgment which your conscience makes

against yourself. This incessant fault finding will release in you “self-justification” and help make you more “innocent” than ever. Read the gossip columns to repress your guilt by finding others more guilty than you.

Third, when you are judged, immediately become irritated. Let your anger increase the more you recognize that the criticism is justified. One downside of the GPS is you can no longer blame your spouse for getting you lost.

Fourth, after becoming irritated with your neighbor, next become irritated with God. Make fun of religion. Seek out failures in certain individuals who profess to be religious or priests who profess to be men of God, and make them stand for the entire Church. Or better yet, instead of just being irritated with God, deny His existence and then you can make yourself a god.

Fifth, become hard, obstinate and rebellious. Smash things. This will give you strength! People are so hard to live with and they are so unappreciative of you.

Sixth, find a therapist who will tell you that guilt is abnormal and you need more liberation and more freedom from responsibility.

And finally, crush all promptings from God that your denial of sin is worse than sin itself.

Then ask yourself, “Why should I lean on anyone else?”

After all:

- ✓ my eye has its own light,
- ✓ my stomach has its own food,
- ✓ my ear has its own harmonies,
- ✓ my mind needs to teacher,
- ✓ my guilt . . . wait a minute, remember . . .I don't have any guilt.

Are these not the better way? Guiltlessness and innocence in your own life, and wickedness and brutality in everyone else's?

Seeking explanations instead of forgiveness. Mistaking the cross for a crutch. A crutch is something we lean on. A cross is something that leans on us – for forgiveness, which is God's way, and which is better than ours.