

## Homily Notes for Sunday, February 24 2019, 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Time, cycle C

Readings: 1 Sm 26 2:7-9, 12-13, 22-23; 1 Cor 15:45-49; Lk 6:27-38

**1. Introduction:** The readings today are linked together by one main theme: the *power of Christian love*, when exercised with ever present forgiveness. The readings also instruct us about our *right and wrong choices*. The right choices lead us to God, and the wrong ones break our relationship with Him and with one another. To be able to love with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, we need good instruction. This comes to us as Catholics through our Diocese, through its teaching institutions, like the St. Philip Institute and through qualified priests. This illustrates why supporting the Bishop's Annual Appeal and the Priests for Tomorrow capital campaign is important for us and the whole Diocese. This is the Sunday that the Bishop has appointed for the Bishop's Annual Appeal. I will comment briefly on the readings, we will see the video, and have an opportunity to make a pledge.

**2. The first reading** shows us how David respected Saul as God's anointed, even though Saul had sought to kill him. David made a correct choice while Saul continued to make the wrong choices, perpetuating his misery with his revenge. This reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, gives us a vivid example of self-control, forgiveness, and mercy. It is a fundamental principle that we respect the god given office in spite of the behavior of the person occupying that office.

"Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The Lord will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the Lord delivered you into my grasp; I would not harm the Lord's anointed."

For us today, who are those people, what are those positions that demand of us respect and honor, even if the people occupying them are not righteous and just? Is it not therefore good to support our Bishop who is representing moral truth so well?

**3. In the Responsorial Psalm**, Ps 103, the Psalmist reminds us of the mercy of God and His compassion for us "as a Father has compassion on His children." "The Lord is kind and merciful." Yet we know that if we intentionally choose serious sin, that act will separate us from God and earn us his condemnation even though He always "loves" us. To be able to do this we need good instruction.

**4. In the second reading**, Just as Jesus is the "spiritual man" who corrects the sin of the "first man", so we are called to become as the "spiritual man," becoming more like Jesus.

**5. Today's Gospel (Luke 6:27-38)**, gives us Jesus' revolutionary peaceful moral teaching about how we should treat those who hate or oppose us. "*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*" This Golden Rule is amplified by a string of particular commands: "*Love your enemies....*" For Jesus, love is a fundamental attitude that seeks another's good. Jesus orders us to love our enemies and to be merciful as God our Father is merciful. Jesus challenges us to do for others what God does for us. "*Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate.*" St. Thomas Aquinas shows how this must be interpreted in the context of the entire Bible.

"Sacred Scripture needs to be understood in the light of the example of Christ and the saints. Christ did not offer the other cheek to be struck in the house of Annas (Jn 18:22f), nor did St Paul when, as we are told in the Acts of the Apostles, he was beaten in Philippi (Acts 16:22f). Therefore, we should not take it that Christ literally meant that you should offer the other cheek to someone to hit you; what he was referring to was your interior disposition; that is, if necessary we should be ready not to be intolerant of any one who hurts us, and that we should be ready to put up with this kind of treatment, or worse than that. That was how the Lord acted when he surrendered his body to death."

This is why we need good resources for study, like the St. Philip Institute provides. This is also why we need a large number of well-trained seminarians. These are the two largest beneficiaries of the Bishop's Annual Appeal and the Priests for Tomorrow capital campaign.