

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time C2025

Let me start this homily with of an anecdote. Suppose a criminal is brought to court. As he enters the room for the hearing, he sees in front of him the judge and, a little bit in the back, his family including his mother. How will both, the judge and the mother, react? I guess the judge, in his duty and obligation, will apply the law so that justice may be served. I assume, also, that the mother, driven by love and placing herself above any law, will react with compassion and hope that extenuating circumstances can be found to the case of her son.

These two attitudes symbolize two different logics, that of human beings and that of God. For human logic, there is nothing to do in the presence of evil than to stop it or to destroy it. The wicked should be punished, the evil eradicated and justice established. God's logic, on the contrary, is built on compassion, love and forgiveness. It does not mean that God does not see the evildoing; but he gives always to the evildoers and the wicked a new chance so that they may change and come to conversion.

We see God's logic at work in the first reading. David, inspired by religious conviction, opts for forgiveness and spares the life of Saul who was threatening to kill him for cause of jealousy and envy.

The real reason why David did not want to harm Saul was that he was the anointed of God. As the anointing made David special, so is each person created in the image of God. In each person, God is present; he is present even in a criminal that the whole society rejects for his wickedness. A man, even if guilty, is still an anointed of the Lord, that is, a son and daughter of God, worthy of being loved and protected in his rights. God has created him in his own likeness; there is more good in him than the bad he can do.

God's logic is also at work in the proposal our Lord formulates in today's Gospel. God's logic is based on four imperatives that should guide the conduct of his disciples when confronted with evil: love, goodness, blessing and prayer. Let us spell it out: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Our Lord does not ask us to fall in love with our enemies, which would be unrealistic. Rather he challenges us to be determined about our enemies' welfare, to be gracious, and to refuse to pay back violence with violence. Hatred can be defeated only by love; injury can be healed only by forgiveness; evil can be controlled only by goodness. That is the opposite of our social ways of considering things. That is God's logic by which we have to live if we want to enter his kingdom.

Why is our Lord asking us to love our enemies, to forgive the bad done to us and to be generous with everyone? The first reason is the **principal of identification**, that is "Put yourself in the shoes of the other person." How would we react if we would have hurt people or acted wrongly toward someone? Would not we expect to be forgiven? Or in need would not we expect to be helped? Thus, our Lord can say, "Do to others as you would have them do to you".

Another reason is our **Christian identity**. Being Christian should make a difference in our lives and around us. As the disciples of our Lord we cannot behave like anybody with regard to the situations in which we are involved. Then, our Lord can say: “If you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you?” “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?” “If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?” “Do not sinners do the same?”

One more reason is the **example of our heavenly Father**. God the Father is kind, generous and merciful to each one of his children. If God could judge us, who would survive? (Psalm 130) The way God treats us should inspire us in our behavior toward one another. In other words, our Lord is inviting us not to put conditions to our love or to our generosity, or to our forgiveness of others. We must love and forgive like our Father, without condition. God acts like the mother who believes that her son can change in spite of the crime he has committed.

The last reason is the **principle of reciprocity**. Popular saying says, “What goes around comes around”. The measure we use in judging people, or in giving, or in forgiving, is what comes back to us in turn. If we are open and generous to people, it is possible they do the same with us. If we are mean and unforgiving, it is possible that people do the same with us.

Let me finish. What our Lord is asking of us is not impossible or beyond us. Let us remember that the Gospel is not given for Heroes or Supermen. It is for men and women like you and me. It is only by imitating our Father in heaven that we can live out our Lord’s logic. Human beings, like us, have tried in our time to live out of these principles and have succeeded. Think about Gandhi, M. Luther King, and N. Mandela.

Let us pray for only prayer can dissolve aggressiveness, disarm hearts, communicate the sentiments of our Father who is in heaven, and give the force that stems from the love of God. Amen.

1 Samuel 26: 2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23; 1 Corinth 15: 45-49; Luke 6: 27-38



Homily Date: February 23, 2025
© 2025 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD
Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20250223homily.pdf