

Deacon Tony's Homily for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

There was a time when I preferred reading only the New Testament.

It seemed easier to understand and I felt it fit better into my life.

But I see today that both testaments compliment each other to help us understand God's plan for our lives. Jesus said "I did not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill the law". Until heaven and earth pass away not one letter of the law will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Jesus quotes from the book of Deuteronomy dozens of times. As the two readings line up today, Moses and Jesus were preparing their followers for when they would be without their leader, with last orders. Moses tells his people to always "FEAR" the Lord and obey His statutes. The word fear means to keep in awe of God and obey His commands. The commands are there to help you

"GROW AND PROSPER".

Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

In Leviticus Moses instructed his people thusly: You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you should love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. We have probably heard people say that

I will forgive but I will never forget. Forgetting, is what God does with us.

As we claim to be children of God, and we are, no one can hurt us. **We should never allow someone to rob us of our peace and happiness.**

The greatest command that God gives us is to love.

All love begins with God. He extends perfect love to His children (US) and when we love, in the name of God, that love returns to the Father in a perpetual circle and continues into eternity.

Jesus brought a peace and security into my life during the sacrament of confession. There was forgiveness issue that was blocking the grace that God truly wanted me to receive.

But if we refuse to act on God's command that stops the whole process. So, when I hear Jesus tell the scribe that he is not far from the kingdom of God, I recall how close I was to holding a grudge and rejecting God's invitation. That night was 44 years ago and I remember like it was yesterday.

Recall a moment in your life, when you made a decision for God which resulted in receiving the blessings of a good life and received a happiness that no one could rob from you.

I want to speak about the second reading from Hebrews. Another gift that God gives us is an understanding of His Word. Paul writes of Christ's everlasting priesthood and how He died once for all mankind. There was a time when I did not understand the second readings at Mass because I didn't have the grace of the Holy Spirit to help me. I remember leaving Mass thinking that they should just drop the second reading because I didn't understand a word of it.

Now I feel as if the second readings (mostly Paul's readings) move me to a deeper walk with Our Lord and an understanding that I could not know without God's help.

So, we ask God for that understanding that motivates us to be blessed and to share those blessings with all that we meet.