

## **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time “A” Cycle February 12, 2017**

**There are proponents of what is called a “good enough” mentality. They propose that spouses, parents, children, students, and other should be satisfied with meeting minimum standards in their relationships and in what they do. In one sense this mentality may be helpful in encouraging people to do what is at least required. In another sense, it can discourage excellence and higher achievement of potential.**

**This way of thinking has also been applied to religious faith and practice. Some promote being “good enough Christians,” “good enough Catholics.”**

**This is certainly not what Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith tradition advocate. In the first reading, from the Old Testament Book of Sirach, the inspired author clearly states that we have free will to keep the Lord’s commandments. This will protect us from harm, but, even better, living by the commandments brings us the blessings of a good life.**

**In the Gospel, Saint Matthew continues to give us Jesus’ teaching in his Sermon on the Mount. Jesus states that he has come not to abolish the Jewish Law and the teachings of the prophets, and especially not to do away with the commandments. Rather, he has come to fulfill them, to bring them to completion. Jesus goes beyond the minimum “good enough” observance as he broadens the scope of the commandments.**

**For example, Jesus expands the fifth commandment: “you shall not kill” by stating that the sin of murder has its roots in angry hatred, and hateful, hurtful words for another and is also sinful. It is simply not good enough to avoid murder.**

**In commenting on the sixth commandment: “you shall not commit adultery,” Jesus expands it by teaching that this sin includes not only the act of infidelity in marriage, but also thinking and regarding others as objects of sexual self-gratification, rather than as persons created in God’s image, worthy of respect. It is simply not good enough to just avoid lustful actions.**

**Thank God, it is not only by personal will power and discipline, which is still very important, that we can live up to God’s life-giving commandments. We are all wounded by original sin, and are at times spiritually weak and susceptible to temptation, as Saint Paul teaches. We also have God’s grace, which he freely gives, especially through the sacraments, especially the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, and sincere regular prayer.**

**The Christian life is much more than merely avoiding sin and keeping the commandments, however important they are. By virtue of our faith, we are called to an intimate loving relationship with God, who loves us despite our sins and weaknesses.**

**As the saying about lovers goes, God is crazy about us! As Saint Paul puts it beautifully in today's second reading: "what eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him"**

**May we never be satisfied in being merely "good enough Catholics!"**