



Lenten

Reflections

The Divine Intervention

March 10, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 5: 20-26

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I tell you,

unless your righteousness surpasses that
of the scribes and Pharisees,
you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors,

You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother
will be liable to judgment,

and whoever says to his brother, Raqa,

will be answerable to the Sanhedrin,

and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar,

and there recall that your brother

has anything against you,

leave your gift there at the altar,

go first and be reconciled with your brother,

and then come and offer your gift.

Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court.
Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge,
and the judge will hand you over to the guard,
and you will be thrown into prison.
Amen, I say to you,
you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Our Scripture Reflection

At first hearing, Jesus' words must have sounded bizarre and extreme! Whose righteousness could possibly surprise the righteousness of the religious leaders and teachers, the "experts" in holiness??? As we see many times in Matthew's Gospel, it would not have been that difficult at all because they were often called hypocrites (stage actors) by Jesus. Why? Because they "talked the talk but rarely walked the walk." Jesus expected His disciples to live what they preached and to push and grow as they lived their faith. A lick and a promise was never sufficient for the One who gave everything for His people.

Food for your Journey

There's a story about a troubled mother who had a daughter who was addicted to sweets. One day she approached Gandhi, explained the problem to him and asked whether he might talk to the young girl. Gandhi replied: "Bring your daughter to me in three weeks' time and I will speak to her."

After three weeks, the mother brought her daughter to him. He took the young girl aside and spoke to her about the harmful effects of eating sweets excessively and urged her to abandon her bad habit.

The mother thanked Gandhi for this advice and then asked him: "But why didn't you speak to her three weeks ago?"

Gandhi replied: "Because three weeks ago, I was still addicted to sweets."

And there's the lesson: We must do more than just point out the right road to others, we must be on that road ourselves. For this reason, the integrity of our private lives and private morals, down to the smallest detail, is the real power behind our words.

--Ron Rolheiser, Internet column, "Our inability to cast out demons,"
October 2, 2005. ronrolheiser.com.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You gave everything for my salvation. May I strive to give everything for You. Amen.