

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A 2019-2020

A Message from Fr. Mark

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus the king addresses those who gathered around him desirous of becoming part of his new kingdom, the Church. Our Lord sat down and opened his mouth to give his blessings and his encouragement to those of us who are poor in spirit, meek, persecuted and hungry for righteousness. Despite our lowliness in this world, we have the consolation of knowing that we provide light for the world and that we will be great in the kingdom of heaven. After imparting his kingdom blessings and encouragement, he then gave us his new kingdom law. Six times he referred to laws given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then, since he himself is God, he audaciously proposes some improvements and refinements of the old law. Six times he uses the words: “You have heard it said... but I say to you...”



In today's Gospel, we have five of these six “antitheses.” In each case, Jesus quotes from the laws of the Old Testament and then proposes a new law for the children of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the Old Testament, there was a king who ruled over twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus came to establish a “New Israel,” the Church, which would be guided by twelve apostles who would go out to all of the corners of the world.

Jesus expressed the requirements for those who wish to be members of this new family of God: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,” and “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of God.” At the time of Jesus, it was known that the scribes and Pharisees were content with observing the bare minimum and the externals of the law. There were limits to their love. They made exceptions and allowed a man to hate his enemy, to exact revenge and to divorce his wife. Jesus offered his followers both the invitation and the spiritual graces to live in a new way. It would be a difficult way that would involve carrying one's cross and turning the other cheek and going the extra mile. But the rewards would be out of this world!

Sincerely,  
Fr. Mark