

23. March 2022

## God's healing commandments

**Mt 5:17-19**

*Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved. Therefore, anyone who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but the person who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of Heaven.*

There is definitely no way to relativise God's commandments on the pretext that this is what Jesus intended. In fact, He does the opposite: He reveals to us the deeper meaning of the commandments and gives us the strength to keep them.

When, by the grace of God, I experienced my conversion in 1977, the first thing that became clear to me was that God's commandments are still valid. That was what the Spirit of the Lord immediately put in my heart, so that I put an end to the life of sin that I had unfortunately led up to that time, and returned to God's wise order.

Today, the absolute validity of God's commandments has been called into question. This is widespread in almost every field, especially in the field of morality. Even in the Church there is a tendency to relativise the commandments of God and the Church, and one bishop or another has been heard to say that, given certain circumstances, people could not be required to keep the commandments of the Church. They have said, for example, that it would be too much to ask that the so-called 'divorced and remarried' live in abstinence. By this they mean people who live in a second union, while a valid marriage bond still exists. This requirement, however, is regulated in the encyclical *Familiaris Consortio* of Pope John Paul II and is enshrined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

In the light of the Gospel we have heard today, how could such a view be held?

The right thing to do would be to help people enter into a deeper relationship with the Lord, and to encourage them to strive to keep his commandments, even if it seems difficult. If this is done, they will discover more deeply the beauty and dignity of the commandments; they will be heartily sorry whenever they have offended against them; and, strengthened by the sacrament of penance, they will take up and continue on the path of God's healing commandments.

We must be very careful what we pass on to people as God's teaching. How easily souls

can be misled or fall into error when we do not take the Lord's commandments as the absolute criterion!

His commandments are not just one reality among others. Today we often speak of people's life situations, which are often far away from the commandments, and this reality is used as an argument to say that high moral standards should not be imposed on them.

For God's grace to be fully unfolded, it is necessary that we regard His commandments as the all-pervading reality to which all must submit.

To be sure, there must be a process for people who were living far from God to first come to know his commandments. But we can firmly count on the help of grace, for many people, like me, have experienced a conversion and, as a fruit, understood that they must henceforth keep God's commandments.

Nor are His commandments simply a distant ideal, to which we must strive to attain. Holy Scripture tells us that the commandments are life, and any life that moves away from them does not possess the true life that comes from God.

That is why it is so important to proclaim the gospel; and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to call people to conversion. As the Lord says, we cannot abolish even the least of the commandments, nor teach men so, without bringing with it the respective consequences.

On the contrary, we should keep the commandments ourselves, and teach others to do so. May the Spirit of the Lord always enlighten us to find the right word, which will fall into the open heart of the hearer!