

Rules are needed in life. (repeat)

It's time to go to bed!

Why mom?

I know it is hard to stop playing but you need your rest.

But I don't want to!

I know, but you need to anyway.

What is going on here? The child has not yet interiorized the reason for the rule. The child does not understand why they need sleep.

Here is another rule. You need to come to mass weekly.

Two persons may respond to this rule quite differently.

One person comes to church every Sunday but practically falls asleep and another person who comes once a year but fully enters into it.

One is following the exterior rule by coming every week but the other is entering the spirit by having communion with God when he does come.

Neither person embraces the norm of the Church well. But the one who comes once a year with deep fervor may be more easy to convince to come more frequently because he/she knows from within the reason for coming whereas it may be more difficult to convince

the person who comes regularly but has not interiorized why he or she is here. How do we grow to embrace the norms of life?

The interior life of Jesus is directed by the Holy Spirit. (repeat)

The whole reason why Jesus exists is to radiate the Spirit of love which binds him to the one he calls Father. It is that Spirit which he came to share with us. Paul says that is in the Spirit that we live and move and have our being.”

But in today’s gospel the Pharisees seem to have forgotten why they keep religious customs and laws. They are simply enforcing laws without any interior understanding. They have forgotten how the Spirit of the living God has saved them. They have forgotten how the living God should be at the core of all they do. Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is Lord alone. Therefore you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. Touch the mezuzah and say this prayer every time they enter and leave their home.

They have forgotten how God had led them out of slavery to freedom. They had forgotten how he had fed them in the desert for forty years

and led them to the Promised Land. They had forgotten how God had invited them into a covenant of love by giving them the commandments based on loving God and our neighbor. The Pharisees were simply enforcing laws without communicating the Spirit of God which was at the center of the law.

And we, why do we keep laws? Is it because we just fear being punished? Or is it because we have interiorized a way of living in the Spirit which calls us to live a life of loving God and our neighbor based on the commandments and on the preaching and example of Jesus?

(Story of men in prison coming back over and over again.) They were never taught laws. Never modeled it for them in their lives. Through a series of movies the psychologist invited the men to grow through different stages:

- If you do not keep the law you will be punished.**
- If you keep the law you will be rewarded.**
- Negotiating for a just relationship between people. Signed agreement.**
- Writing God's law in our hearts (prophets)**
- Going beyond the law: covenant**
- Jesus. Loving one another in the Spirit as God has loved us.**

That is why Jesus is so frustrated with the Pharisees. They speak as religious leaders but have not interiorized the Law they preach.

- **Do we not live in similar times?**
- **Do all religious leaders live what they preach?**
- **Do all political leaders live what they teach?**

In today's gospel, Jesus asks us to look inside. See what is coming out from inside of us.

Holy Homework:

Reflect on two questions: What causes you to break the laws?

Is it one on the list he gives in today's gospel?

What Spirit is directing your life ?

Can we gratefully say with St. Paul, "Lord, it is in you we live and move and have our being."