

Breaking Open the Word: YOU HAVE HEAR IT SAID! BUT I SAY!

February 19, 2023: 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

WE READ, LISTEN and BREAK OPEN THE WORD:

Today's Readings: **Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23** and the Gospel: **Matthew 5:38-48**. While someone reads the Scripture(s), listen well. BE AWARE OF THE IMAGE BEING PAINTED, OR THE STORY BEING TOLD. DOES THE STORY OR THE IMAGE CALL TO MIND ANYTHING SIMILAR IN YOUR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE? Share your impressions.

Today's Readings from the Book of Leviticus and Matthew we are pretty clear about the relationship we have in God/Christ – trusted companions being mentored in Love. **Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy...bear [no] hatred for your brother or sister in your heart. Take no revenge...cherish no grudge against any of your people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** (Lev)

✓ What does "holiness" look like? Two ways to answer that:

✓ What "everyone else" says holiness is:

✓ How the goodness, compassion and balance which you offer people makes a difference:

In the side bar, there are some significant developments from Exodus (Book and Experience) to the community of Leviticus.

✓ To whom were Exodus and Leviticus written? (Check out the column about Leviticus for a hint.)

✓ Through what Exodus moments (conversion moments; healing a relationship; death of a significant person; resolution of a bad situation; confronting an addiction; dealing with anger; breaking away from abuse; dumping cigarettes; a major health issue...) have you pilgrimaged?

✓ What has been important for you to remember "on the other side of the water" after living into renewed life and hope?

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Today in Matthew, continuing from last Sunday's text, we get two **You-have-heard-it-said** statements. But these two are expansive. In the **but-I-say-to-you** expansion is a concrete plan for reconciliation. **offer no resistance to one who is evil. You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

✓ When have you attempted that admonition?

✓ How did it work out for you?

✓ Considering these are "toxic" encounters or relationships, what's your experience of navigating their reality?

✓ When is a toxic situation ripe for confrontation and mitigation? When have you sailed the seas of uncertainty and come out with hope?

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We enter Lent this week! Live an Exodus pilgrimage in order to discover that God is already indwelling you.

The Book of Leviticus is the 3rd book of canonical Jewish and Christian Scripture consisting mainly of priestly legislation (Merriam Webster). It contains Levitical law and ritual precepts (Collins Dictionary) relating to priests and Levites (Your Dictionary).

The purpose of Leviticus is to reveal the absolute holiness of God, and the conditions on which God may be approached. **The address of the Book is to a people already redeemed.** No one who has not come through Exodus [bondage] can come into Leviticus [freedom]. In Exodus we are brought near to God; in Leviticus we are kept near. In Exodus we have the fact of the Atonement; in Leviticus, the doctrine of it. Exodus begins with sinners, Leviticus, with saints. In Exodus we have God's approach to us; in Leviticus we have our approach to God. In Exodus, Christ is the Savior; in Leviticus, Christ is the Sanctifier. Exodus begins with a people degenerate; but Leviticus, with a people regenerate. In Exodus, we have the revelation of God as Love; in Leviticus, the revelation of God as Light. **In Exodus, we are brought into union with God; in Leviticus, we are brought into communion.** Exodus offers us pardon; Leviticus offers us purity. In Exodus we are delivered from sin; in Leviticus, we are delivered unto God. In Exodus, God speaks from the Mount; in Leviticus, He speaks from the Tent of Meeting. The Mount is the place of government; but the Tent of Meeting is the place of covenant (Roger Carswell).

Intercessions

Jesus, as our Passover, is our surest peace. He is our Teacher, and our healer!

- **We long to share in Community Prayer and to participate of the Body and Blood of Christ at our parish Eucharistic Liturgy. Fill our emptiness and longing.**
- **May we be gathered into one Body in Christ, who heals every division in our families, our parish community as well as in our civil society.**
- **Help us to work together for the peace and justice of your kingdom.**
- **Help us breathe life and hope into life giving social and political systems in society.**

Other petitions/prayers... **All: Transform us in our life.**

All: Our Father...