

15th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C
July 13-14, 2019

Holding All Things Together

Readings: Deuteronomy 30:10-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37

“For this command that I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you.” Unless we are watching a mystery film or reading a good novel, I have come to the conclusion that most people would refer to avoid mystery. It is just too much work in today’s society. We want clarity and resolution—we want it now!

Today we are privy to the beginnings of a long and powerful speech that Moses delivers to the people. He “enjoins” them with a command. To “enjoin” means more than suggest, it means to prescribe and sanction, to urge someone to do something, to direct and impose by an authoritative order. Moses needed to get the attention of the people and so asserted his rightful authority.

The exercise of authority is tricky these days— some who have it struggle with how to exercise it effectively. This goes for teachers, parents and yes, it can go for employers and even though in the Church. If someone loses credibility, their authority is devoid of practical effect. People ignore them. In sports, they may say that the Coach has “lost the locker room,” thus has lost control.

The reasons for losing one’s authority are many and varied, and they are not always just. In this reading, Moses clearly still has the respect and authority and so as a result, there was a good chance that the people would listen to him and heed his command.

Why would God command the impossible? It makes little sense to me. By the same token, the Gospel is tough, it is difficult and increasingly so to many today. To live the Catholic faith’s teaching on responsible parenthood, rejecting a contraceptive mentality, to live the virtue of chastity, to pray daily, to attend Mass each and every single Sunday and Holy Day, these all take commitment. They are not easy, but ask yourself...are they impossible? Absolutely not!

The commands of God are neither too remote, nor too far away. We are told today that the commands are in our mouths and in our hearts. All we have to do is carry them out. And for this, there are no shortcuts.

Perhaps you have come across online meal kits that contain all the ingredients to cook a meal—meat, fish, or poultry, vegetables, lettuce, sauce and spices. You simply mix the ingredients and cook the meal according to the instructions provided. It is a \$3 billion industry...everything is ready in 20-30 minutes. I am not criticizing it by any stretch; at \$10.00 per serving, it is cheaper than a restaurant, though clearly pricier than cooking everything yourself. But there is a price to things being easy.

There is no online app for living the Gospel teachings efficiently and effectively. There are few spiritual shortcuts, though now the priest's breviary is online, and you swipe the iPad as you would a Kindle, and no setting of ribbons for feasts which takes time. I still feel a bit like I am cheating!

God does not command what is beyond us, even though we surely will be tested and tested many times over. Are we okay with being tested or do we automatically resent being tested? Have you asked yourself this question?

Do we take Saint Paul's words to the Colossians seriously? Do we really believe that in Christ Jesus, "all things hold together"? God is not asking of us something too difficult, only to obey God's laws, which of necessity includes caring for one another, watching out for one another, bearing one another's burdens.

Moses challenged the people to realize that the commandments are neither too mysterious, nor too remote— we are to love our brothers and sisters, seeing that what unites us is that we are all members of God's family.