

Ordinary Time 22B 2015

Doers of the Word

In today's first reading, Moses speaks to the people of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land. "Hear the statutes and decrees I am teaching you to observe *that you may live* ... observe them carefully, for thus you will give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations."

The law of which Moses was speaking was no ordinary law. It was the law that he himself had received from God on Mount Sinai. That law was not to be a burden but a gracious gift of God; and it was by observing this law that Israel was to enjoy the fullness of God's blessing.

In today's gospel, however, Jesus finds himself in conflict with some of the religious leaders of his day who were now giving more importance to their own rules and traditions than they were to God's law. They began with good intentions, as we human beings often do. They had devised rules and regulations to safeguard and protect God's law. But as time passed these rules and regulations became more important for them than God's law.

Although there are times that laws can be burdensome, we know that laws are important. If there were no traffic laws, there would be utter chaos on the roads. If there were no laws regulating how we should live with one another, society could not function. But what is true human law is all the more true of God's law, but with this important difference: *God's law is the source of life and*

grace. God's law shows us how to live as God intended us to live. God's law leads us on the path of peace, and joy, and justice. God's law brings us into the presence of God. Indeed, this is what we proclaimed in today's responsorial psalm when we sang, "The one who does justice *will live* in the presence of the Lord."

We find God's law in the scriptures we hear every Sunday. We hear God's law in the Ten Commandments that Moses received at Mount Sinai. We hear God's law in Jesus' great Sermon on the Mount. But most importantly, we *see* God's law in Jesus Christ. For Jesus is the one who perfectly does God's law; Jesus shows us how to live God's law through the commandment to love God and each other.

Week after week, we are given the grace to listen to God's Word as it is proclaimed in the Old and New Testament. And every time we hear this Word in the depth of our heart, and every time we do what it commands, we walk in the way of justice and peace; we walk in the way of life.

Those who are truly happy follow God's law as revealed in Jesus Christ. Those who experience the fullness of peace observe God's law as seen in Jesus Christ. Those who enjoy the fullness of life, do God's Word. This is why St. James tells us to be *doers* of the Word and not merely hearers of it. For, it is in doing God's Word from the depth of our heart that we find the peace, the joy, and life that only God can give.