

7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,
12-13,22-23
Ps 103:1-4,8,10,12-13
1 Corinthians 15:45-49
Luke 6:27-38

Monday February 21
James 3:13-18
Ps 19:8-10,15
Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday February 22
Chair of St. Peter
1 Peter 5:1-4
Ps 23:1-3a,4,5,6
Matthew 16:13-19

Wednesday February 23
St. Polycarp
James 4:1-17
Ps 49:2-3,6-11
Mark 9:38-40

Thursday February 24
James 5:1-6
Ps 49:14-20
Mark 9:41-50

Friday February 25
James 5:9-12
Ps 103:1-4,8-12
Mark 10:1-12

Saturday February 26
James 5:13-20
Ps 141:1-3,8
Mark 10:13-16

We can use this Sunday's Gospel passage as a checklist to survey our holiness. Jesus is outlining, in very clear terms, true Christian living. He describes how to love -- faithfully and unconditionally, which sometimes means sacrificially as well.

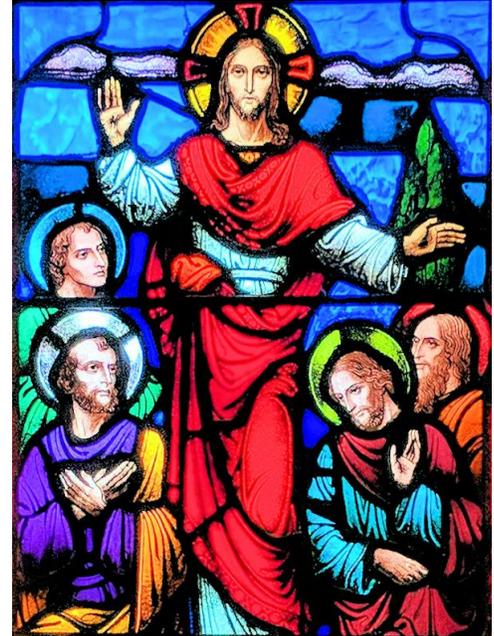
It's not an easy love, that's for sure. But it's God's love. This is how he loves us! And to remain in his love, we love others the same way he loves them. When we don't, we separate ourselves from God's love. That's why Confession is called the Sacrament of Reconciliation; it reunites us to God and to all those we've separated ourselves from through sin.

Love even your enemies, Jesus says. An "enemy" is anyone who opposes us in any way -- opposes our will, our desires, our needs, etc.

Holy living separates us from the world and unites us to God. Christianity is counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. It goes against our nature --

our fallen nature, that is. Our sinful nature. In our baptisms, we received God's nature. That means we have the ability to love as God loves. However, we need to rely on God's help (the Holy Spirit) to resist the pull back into sin and be holy instead.

"If you do good to those who do good to you, so what? Even sinners do that much." To remain in God's love, we do good to everyone, whether they deserve it or not.



If by the Spirit's help we genuinely love everyone, we become much more fully aware of the love that Jesus has for us -- in good measure and overflowing. It is, after all, his love that we give when we love others while they oppose us.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. On Jesus' checklist for Christian living, which ones are you already doing fairly well?
2. Which ones are hardest for you?
3. What will you do this week to live in God's love more fully?
4. Choose one of the items on Jesus' checklist. How does it bring you closer to God?