



Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Introductory Prayer: Lord, as I journey through Lent I have a great desire to be close to you. I know that I am your creature and that I owe you all glory and homage. I want to glorify you by following your teaching. I need you to help me see clearly the truth of your teaching and to love you in return. Here I am Lord, hungry for you alone. I know that you will not turn me away empty-handed.

Petition: Lord, teach me what it means to fulfill the law.

1. The Spirit Fulfills the Mere Letter: We can speak of fulfilling the law in two ways: by doing everything that is asked or by completing that which is missing. Jesus completes the law of the Old Testament with the new law of love – to love one another as he has loved us. Jesus fulfills the law not by simply fulfilling each of the many precepts, but by showing where all of the precepts have their end: in loving God above all things. When we obey the law of love we are fulfilling all of the laws – we are bringing them to their natural end.

2. The All-Encompassing New Law: The law of love reaches to the ends of the earth. There is no created being in the universe that is outside the law of love that Jesus has come to teach us. There is no being, not even the smallest, that escapes the demand of this law. When Jesus uses the metaphor, “the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter,” he is showing us the completeness of this law. Love and its demands reach to the farthest ends of the universe, to the smallest created being, and to the end of time. Am I convinced in my heart and in my actions that the law of love asks me to love all people – not just my family, friends and those

who rub me the right way?

3. Seeking Perfection: The commandments of the old law as exemplified in the Ten Commandments (e.g. Thou shall not kill; Thou shall not commit adultery; etc.) are grave transgressions but easy to define, referring as they do to external actions. Christ's commandments (e.g. to not show anger; to not lust in the heart; to forgive our enemies; etc.) have more subtle expressions, and because of this often times they are more difficult to obey. Living these commandments with the proper motivation and a considerate, dedicated attitude is what makes a person great. Having love as the motivation of all of our actions not only helps us make it to heaven, but also will win us a greater share in God's happiness and glory there.

Conversation with Christ: Thank you, Lord, for this time of prayer. Do not let me be content simply to do the minimum that my faith asks of me. Do not let me be content simply with avoiding grave sin. Help me to live the fullness of the law of charity. I want this Lent to be a time of growth in love.

Resolution: When I am obeying the laws of the Church I will stop to reflect how they fit into the greater law of love.