
11 SATURDAY

Saturday, 1st Week in Lent

Deut 26: 16-19

Ps 118: 1-2,4-5,7-8

Matt 5: 43-48

The two readings today present us with a contrast. The first, about the Old Testament covenant between the Lord God and His people is a kind of legal document outlining obligations of the people towards God and of God towards them. The second is Jesus' gospel invitation to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, an invitation to go far beyond obligations and laws. Being children of the Father should prompt us to go beyond the "balance" of rights and wrongs, to go against a too-easily accepted notion of 'justice' as a kind of mid-point between two (or more) obligations, rights or wrongs. Rather, it's Jesus' message that enemies are to be loved, not hated; that love and greetings are not to be reserved only for those we know will love and greet us in return. This is the meaning of a love that does not count the cost, God's love given to us who've never 'deserved' it, given at the cost of His own Son's life. Good people and bad alike both receive the blessings of gentle life-giving rain and the sun's scorching burning heat, equally given by our good Father. How can we imitate the Father in this ? The time of Lent is an invitation to greater love, of both God and of other people. When we pray about the Passion and Death of Jesus, and start to realise more deeply how much the Father has loved us in giving us His Son, and Jesus has loved us in giving His human life for us, how can we not understand the 'demands' of love ? Teach us, Lord, how to love and not count the cost.

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