

In today's long Gospel, Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks about the law, commandments, requirements, and the expectations of His time. Then He goes on to interpret some of the commandments to show the full extent of their requirements.

In the first reading from the book of Sirach, it says : *"If you choose, you can keep the commandments, they will save you."*

Why is there any emphasis on the law or the commandments? It seems that many need external rules, regulations, guidelines, expectations, laws or commandments by which to live. Their thought seems to be, 'if I fulfill all that is expected of me, if I keep every one of the requirements, I will be assured of gaining heaven or of being saved.'

The slightest deviation is a cause of alarm. They do not want to lose that of which Paul speaks in his first letter to the Corinthians. *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared..."*

For the Hebrews there were over 600 laws or regulations listed in the Old Testament. And for us, there is a thick volume called the Code of Canon Law which has over 1700 canons or laws contained therein.

Who of us even knows all the Old Testament requirements set out for guidance or for observance? Who of us can even repeat accurately the Ten Commandments and all they expect of us?

Jesus often spoke about commandments. Chiefly, He was referring to His Commandment. He stated His Commandment simply *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* (John 13:34)

If we were to keep this one commandment of His, we would not need any other commandment or requirement. For as Matthew writes in His Gospel after Jesus spoke about the first and greatest commandment and the second like the first, *"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* (22:40)

Sounds easy, but it isn't, for it takes a conscious effort to really love our neighbor. And not only must we love one another but we are given the example to emulate *"...as I have loved you."*

Study the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ; His compassion, His forgiveness, His endearment to the young. Study also His teaching, the beatitudes and so much more.

Apparently, commandments, laws and requirements are needed for an orderly society. But the most important is *"Love one another. As I have loved you"*. *"If you choose, you can keep the (two) commandments, they will save you."*