

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time, February 15, 2026

When God gave Moses the Law so that Moses could give the Law to his people, God never intended for the Law to be an end in itself. What was intended was for the Law to be a means to an end. He wanted the Law to be the means by which His people could enter into real relationship with Him and live by His love. This seems to be one of the one of the things that frustrated Jesus about scribes and Pharisees and the scholars of the Law. It seemed that they tended to make the Law an end in itself so that life was all about just following the Law. So, the exact letter, part of the letter, and that was all instead of seeing the Law as a means of being in right relationship with God. But Jesus says, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets.”* The living of the Law is good. I see a few attorneys out there (laughter) but following the Law is good but the Law is not the end. The Law is a means to an end.

So, if God's purpose in giving the Law was to bring His people into relationship with Him then Jesus is absolutely the fulfillment of the Law. He did not abolish it, but to fulfill it; to bring mankind into the fullest of relationship with God the Father. So, He comes to fulfill the Law and really perhaps to demonstrate very well that the Law is a means and not the end. I think it's all too easy for us to set our eyes on the means and lose sight of the end.

When I was in school, I don't think I really had much of a concept that I was supposed to be growing in knowledge and wisdom. I did the assignments; I did the homework; I took the test and I got the grade. That's what it was about, right? I was, this is just what we were supposed to do as students, right? Pay attention, do the work, get an A. And that's what I did. So, I don't think I exactly had much of a love of learning. The means became the end. I still learned a lot,

but I lost real sight of the real goal of education by just focusing on the means of receiving an education.

Another example would be in the learning of playing the piano, you know, you can learn the scales, you can learn to play every note just right. Don't play the sour note. There is loud, soft, faster, and slower but I didn't realize, until sometime later, that the piano was a means of creating beauty, and expressing oneself. So, to just focus on all the minutia, all the mechanics of it, was losing the big picture.

The means becomes an end, and of course, this can happen very much in our lives of faith as well. For example, our practice of prayer, how often do we get to the end of the day and say, "Oh, I still have to get my prayers in." Or we think of prayer as an item on our to do list, a task to be accomplished. Well, it's good to have a sense that we should pray. But if it's just a duty then we've lost sight of the fact that God wants to draw us through prayer to Him. The goal is prayer is God and not just the fulfillment of the task and we have lost sight of the big picture there.

Or think about getting involved with activities in the church. It's wonderful to get involved in the life of a parish community, but if it is just activity and we forget that the goal is to know God, then we're off the mark - we made the means an end.

Or we have Lent coming up. Sorry to break the news to you but Lent is coming up. Maybe you are already thinking about what you are going to do for Lent? What are you going to give up for Lent? It's easy to make the means to an end and say, oh, well, I'm giving this up. And then by the end, I've done it. And I get an A. But all of our Lenten services are meant to be means to end to the glory of God. God is the end that we are looking for.

Or even this whole endeavor of trying to reestablish silence in church and quiet, an atmosphere of prayer. It is not just what Father wants to do. We are using this as a means to an end so that this is a place where at any time, someone can pray and be with the Lord.

Maybe we are in a situation of need when we are asking the Lord for something, and our hope is that God will give us the thing we want. Maybe we're looking for a word from God, some sort of guidance, or instruction - "What am I supposed to do in this situation?" Even there, we can be focused on the word we want God to speak, instead of God who speaks the Word. Or if we're asking God for a miracle, a healing, something to change in our life, you can focus on that thing instead of God who gives the gift. We want God to do something. We can focus on the 'doing of the something' instead of God who does it. In everything we're looking for God, but we can fall into the temptation to allow the means to become the end.

And in the Gospel today, Jesus, again, speaking about the Law, if we think living our Christian life is a matter of not doing a bunch of things, we hear Him say, "You shall not kill" Ok, got that. "Do not commit adultery." Great, got that. Go on down the list - I didn't do that; I didn't do that; I didn't do that, so, I must be good. Jesus is saying, it's not just about not doing the something bad. He's revealing here the kind of an interiority that is conducive to friendship with God. So, you can say, "I haven't killed anyone." And Jesus says, "*Are you angry with your brother? Are you angry with your neighbor?*" That's not conducive to a friendship with God. Maybe you haven't committed adultery. Then He says, "Have you looked with anyone with lust?" That's not the kind of spiritual interior life that has been used to communion with friendship with God.

Jesus is aiming this this whole business of discipleship and Christian life from a real surface level - I'm doing this and not doing that – to a deeper level where it is about the heart. Interiorly, do we have a heart that shows we are seeking God? That's what He is looking for. Not just to be following a set of rules but to be seeking Him with all our heart.

So, when we hear Jesus' teaching today, it's a good opportunity for us to take a look at our practice, our discipleship, the way that we look at the means and the end. Are there areas in our life where we sometimes make the means into an end in themselves? Are we focused on doing this thing, not doing that thing, and having lost sight of the one we are seeking in doing that thing or not doing that thing.

It's a good opportunity today for us to ask the Lord for the grace to let the means truly be means. We can thank the Lord – He has given us so many different means to reach out to Him, to seek Him, to pursue Him to find Him. We ask for the grace in all of those things, not forget to seek Him and to see His face.