

## **6th Sunday in OT (C)**

Our psalm today sounds very much like Jeremiah's oracle, though it adds something to his prophecy. Jeremiah described the righteous one who flourishes like a green tree as the one who trusts in the Lord, but the psalmist adds that he "meditates on his law day and night."

On the one hand, we can take "the law of the Lord" as a reference to Scripture. In this way, the blessed believer is the one who meditates on Scripture, who reads it, ponders it, and memorizes it. This is what great Saints do, and we Catholics need to recover the practice of meditation and memorization of scripture.

On the other hand, the law of the Lord can be taken specifically as the moral law taught in Scripture. The law has a bad reputation nowadays, both inside and outside the church, as many, even among theologians and clergy, make a false and misleading opposition, between "love" and "law," as if there could possibly be times when the requirements of the moral law— what is "right" to do— are contrary to the way of love— the "loving thing" to do.

In reality, however, the morally right thing to do is always synonymous with the loving thing to do. Our real problem is that almost all of us simply equate "niceness" with love, such that we seldom have the courage to be truly loving and tell people the truth in difficult situations. Instead, most of us prefer to be nice and tell others the lies they want to hear, and that will keep our lives comfortable. However, speaking or condoning lies and falsehood is never the way of love; it's the way of cowardice.

Fulton Sheen: Truth without love is cold; love without truth is a lie.

Our Lord sets for us the example in this. Although he was Love incarnate, he did not shrink from "being real" with the Pharisees, scribes, and others whose salvation was in danger. I suspect we often think that Jesus simply didn't like the Pharisees, but the truth is, he loved them and wanted their salvation. That's why he spoke so strongly and plainly to them.

Despite everything that is said by people both outside and inside the Church, nonetheless, that man or woman is blessed who loves and ponders deeply God's moral law as it is stated in Scripture and in the teaching of the Church. He or she may be persecuted, as Jeremiah was, but such men and women will find their strength in God and receive an eternal blessing.