

WE ARE NOT PERFECT BEINGS, BUT WE CAN PERFECTLY ACCEPT  
& REMEMBER CHRIST'S COMMANDMENT OF LOVE

*Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – 19 February 2023*



Over the last three consecutive Sundays, we listened to Matthew chapter 5 of Jesus' sermon on the mountain, from being blessed in the poor spirit and being salt and light to completing the Law with Jesus. Every week, the gospel readings present Jesus as speaking to us about discovering the Kingdom of God near us. The Sunday gospel readings of the past three weeks are notably not straightforward in terms of indicating concrete actions to take or the ultimate objective of discerning Jesus' teachings. For instance, there is a lack of clarity and further explanations of *"being poor in Spirit and being salt in our lives"*.

This Sunday, we obtain the commandments that are fairly direct to us. Furthermore, Jesus finally articulates what his teachings orient towards, that is, perfection. The first reading similarly illustrates our ultimate goal in life, Holiness. In holiness, perfection is made. However, being perfect is strenuous, and in a realistic sense, it is not achievable. Human beings are finite and do not have all traits or skills that develop themselves at best.

We are asked to offer both the left and right cheek to our enemies. We are asked to double what we are asked for. Those requests do not make sense as we have our own dignity, boundaries and limited capabilities. Both of Christ's requests remain ambiguous in terms of what we can hope to achieve by following them.

We naturally seek progress in what we do. In other words, we pursue great 'consequences.' All teams attending the NRL do their own best to bring the best result.

However, the process of reaching the result is far more significant. Again, the NRL winner is not only the team that gains great consequences. The other teams make their own progress in different areas, such as building team spirit. We all remember all teams' efforts for the NRL, although not all teams can advance to the grand final.

Along with reaching advance, remembering our effort, enthusiasm, and our presence is crucial. Likewise, Christ asks us to be holy and perfect, but he has already known that we cannot always be holy and perfect. Thus, where he really wants to sense perfection is our effort and will. We cannot be perfect, but we can perfectly remember Jesus' name and his commandment for holiness. We can perfectly get closer to our Lord by receiving his Body. We can perfectly remember who we are in our relationship with Christ. Once we strive to be perfect in our own way, our Lord will fill in the gaps with his grace and mercy.

In several days, we will embark on the journey of Lent. It is timely to listen to Jesus' commandment of holiness before the beginning of Lent. The journey will be challenging for us as to putting down all our needs for self-giving and self-emptiness. We are not perfect beings, yet we will be able to be perfect in pursuing holiness on the journey of Lent and remembering where we will reach, that is, the joy of the resurrection of Christ.

Let us confidently accept Christ's commandment for holiness and perfection with our full trust in him.

Peace.

Deacon Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/021923.cfm>