

## Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 10th 2017

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother

has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift. - Matthew

Before our 50th high school reunion, my cousin and I were speculating about who else might attend. I said that I dreaded reconnecting with several of our classmates who had physically bullied me in junior high. Just thinking about them made me feel once again like a misfit teen-age nerd.

My cousin, a much nicer person than I will ever be (he was chosen to crown the Blessed Virgin for being the class member most like her), set me straight. "It's been more than 50 years since that happened. Isn't it time you got over it?" Touche!

I agreed to try. At the reunion, I even visited pleasantly with the bullying ringleader whom, I could not help but notice, now outweighed me by about 100 pounds instead of the 50 in high school.

I thought about this incident as I meditated on today's reading from Matthew about making peace with our brothers and sisters with whom we have battled. I also realized that I would not have gloated about being better preserved than my former tormentor if I had fully absorbed what today's gospel tells us. Hey! Following Jesus will always be a work in progress.

Jesus knows we all carry such baggage and he offers us a solution for getting rid of it. Confront our anger. Reach out to those who have hurt us or whom we have hurt to try to reach some form of reconciliation. If nothing else, develop amnesia when it comes to ancient hurts and slights. If we have been the bully instead of the bullied, it's never too late to say sorry.

This could be the best Lenten penance we do – even better than passing up a sinfully delicious mint chocolate Dove piece after dinner.

Happy Lent and know that Jesus understands how hard obeying this command is.

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