

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 7th 2018

I HAVE COME NOT TO ANNUL THE LAW BUT TO FULFILL IT

Laws are meant to facilitate life in community. Without laws or rules, there will be chaos and conflicts among people living together. But laws have a tendency to assume an independent existence of their own and to become oppressive if absolutized. When Jesus said he came to fulfill the law, he meant the laws that genuinely promote the peace, harmony and well-being. But he is aware that people in power can manipulate the law to their own ends or to make life harder for people. So there are instances in the Gospel when Jesus seemed to break the law — like when he healed during the Sabbath, when he allowed his disciples to pick grains during the Sabbath, when he and his disciples omitted the purification rituals before meals, etc. It is important that we have a healthy relationship to the law. We recognize that laws are important to guide peoples' relationship. But we should not follow them - blindly. We have to see them in the context of the concrete situation and their impact on people. In education, what should be emphasized should not be conformity to rules and regulations but the development of good judgment and responsible decision-making that is guided by reason and one's conscience. It also means taking responsibility for one's decision and the consequences of our actions.

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