**6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [16th February, 2014]**

READINGS: Sirach 15:15-20 / 1 Cor. 2:6-10 / Matthew 5:17-37

THEME: THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

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Today many people don’t want to hear about “dos and don’ts”. In the name of freedom and “freedom of expression” in particular, many people want to do things the way they feel it is “good”.

On the other hand, many people are careful in following the “dos and don’ts” in the manuals of their expensive phones, TVs, cars, etc. Why? Because they don’t want to damage their phones, TVs, etc. Similarly, because God doesn’t want us to destroy the precious life He has given us, He gives us His commandments (“dos and don’ts”) to follow.

Let us use the image of a good earthly parent to further illustrate why God has given us the commandments:

* A good parent has a dream for his or her children;
* A good parent invests in the children to realize the dream.
* A good parent, being wiser than his kids, gives them “dos and don’ts”.
* The “dos and don’ts” guide the children along the path that leads to the dream.

1. A DREAM FOR THE CHILDREN

A good parent’s good dream for his/her children gives them a good start in life and makes his/her own retirement more peaceful and full of contentment. As a good parent may even dream of the school of the child even before the child is conceived, so God had a dream for us even before we were born. And the most important part of His dream is about our future destination: to be in heaven.

1. INVESTMENT IN THE CHILDREN

Like a good earthly parent, our heavenly Father has invested in each of us. He has invested sufficiently in us to enable us to realize the dream of reaching heaven one day. The investments of God include the shedding of the precious blood of His Son, Jesus Christ; and the graces of the Holy Spirit.

1. THE DOS AND DON’TS

For instance, a parent who invests in his/her child’s education – relying on his/her wisdom and knowledge – may instruct the child about some dos and don’ts:

* “Don’t go out of school during lessons; rather, do stay in school and study”;
* “Don’t smoke; rather, do some sports”; etc.

Similarly, God our Father – who is far wiser than us – gives us His commandments:

* “Thou shall not kill.” Do rather “forgive your neighbour”;
* “Thou shall not swear”; rather “let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’”; etc.

1. REASON FOR THE DOS AND DON’TS

As the DOS and DON’TS of a good parent are not meant to make life unbearable for the child, but to enable him/her attain a better life in the future, so according to the first reading (Sirach 15:15-20), God’s commandments are not to make life unbearable, but to give us life instead of death. Yes, in His wisdom and based on His dream for our future, God has given us DOS and DON’TS to enable us achieve life and not death; indeed to attain eternal life in heaven and not eternal death in hell!

CONCLUSION

Beloved, I pray:

* That you and I will begin to see the commandments of God in a new light;
* That He will give us the enabling grace to obey them; and
* That by our obedience, we shall enjoy more of God’s blessings. Amen!