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Sunday22-B5 homily by Fr. Gabor

The main focus of today's readings is the keeping of the Law of God.

What does keeping of the Law mean? Certainly it is not merely about following the letter and trying to comply with it, because that would be a purely mechanically, cold manner of compliance with the Law without putting your heart into it. I am sure that's not how our heavenly Father wants to treat us his children, but rather he wants us to put our hearts into everything we do and say and especially into keeping His Law, which is in line with what St. Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians (2: 9): 'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'

How does God the Father help us to keep the Law from the heart? First of all He is there at the bottom of our hearts. There He inspires and speaks to us through our conscience and reminds us of His Law through the Holy Spirit. Then He strengthens our will to follow His Law. But this really only works if in the first place we open our hearts to Him and enter into a Heart to Heart relationship with Him. It is our well known experience that we are more prone to do the will of someone whom we love from the heart. A heart to heart relationship with the Father starts with recalling the wonderful things He has done for us beginning with Jesus' loving self-sacrifice on the cross and then everything good that the Lord has done for you and for others day to day until you burst into praise and worship of Him. Of course for a heart to heart relationship we also need to share with Him what weighs on our hearts, not as if He doesn't know, but because we need to listen to and hear His response to those issues. For a heart to heart relationship we also have to repent and turn away from anything that is not from the Lord and tries to take over our hearts. Jesus mentions a few of them in today's Gospel reading, such as fornication, theft, adultery, malice, indecency, envy, pride, etc. These things put our hearts in opposition to the Law of the Father, and therefore prevent us from loving Him and keeping His Law from the Heart.

Remember the first commandment is to love God with all our minds and strength and with all our hearts. Jesus says that the whole Law and the prophets hang on this one commandment.

In St. Peter's the tabernacle key is attached to a medal and on the back of it it says in Spanish: 'Un amigo para siempre' which means: 'A friend for ever.' You wouldn't believe, but this short phrase has given me so much strength in the past few years, especially when I was gloomy inside and started to doubt the dedication of my friends to me. Just looking at this medal during Mass for a second, reminds me that Jesus will never let me down, because Jesus has given up His life for me. This short phrase always moves my heart, but it also inspires

me to want to be like that: ‘a friend of God and of all good willing people for ever.’

I am grateful for my Spiritual director, because she always reminds me that the most important thing I can do for you the parish is to show God’s love and mercy. Nothing else is more important than these, and where God’s love and mercy reigns there the Kingdom of God grows, and the Law of God is fulfilled.

[St. Columba’s has always been a place where I felt welcomed and loved, and I can assure you it was mutual on my part. So please continue to build the culture of welcome, encouragement and involvement, so that the Kingdom of God may grow among you and you may completely fulfil the most important Law of the heavenly Father, namely to love Him with all your heart and might, and your neighbour as yourself.]