

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 13th 2024

Charity Vs. animosity

Today's Gospel discusses the problem of anger. While the commandment "You shall not kill" had been previously taught, the Sermon on the Mount goes further into the root of violent actions, which is anger. It emphasizes that there are escalating forms of anger and they deserve punishment.

Anger is counterproductive. It causes pain and hurt for ourselves and others. Holding hostility towards another makes us unworthy to come before the Lord in worship. In knowing Jesus, we move away from sin and strive to remain in the spirit of forgiveness, following the example of Jesus who taught this message even from the cross.

The Gospel today provides a clear example of the difference between the requirements of the Ten Commandments and those of Christian discipleship. Unjust killing was considered a serious sin in the Hebrew tradition, just as it is in Christian beliefs today. However, Christian teaching goes even further by addressing one of the root causes of homicide: a hostile spirit.

The dangers of anger include its potential to escalate and harm both the person harbouring it and its target. Name-calling can be increasingly hurtful. As the Letter of John states, if we don't love the people we see, how can we claim to love God whom we don't see? Therefore, harbouring animosity makes our offerings to the Lord fruitless.

Charity is the queen of all virtues, and its impacts are very practical and close to home. Certainly, homicide is excluded from the Christian vision, but one cannot escape the fact that if anger were dealt with more directly, crimes of murder would decrease. But even when anger does not turn violent, it is destructive of our honesty and equanimity.

Biblie Claret