However, I Say to You...

Our Gospel today and the Gospel of next Sunday together form an integral section of Jesus' profound Sermon on the Mount; this one lengthy section (Matthew 5:17-48) extends for 32 verses. It is commonly called Jesus' "six antitheses." We know that an "antithesis" is an alternate assertion different from the original "thesis." Thus, Jesus is giving a new or more profound interpretation of six basic elements of the Jewish law.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) begins with Jesus going up on a mountain, just as Moses went up Mount Sinai. Then, Jesus gives us the Beatitudes, just as Moses gave the people the Ten Commandments. Next, Jesus makes a pivotal statement; he asserts: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill them" (5:17). Indeed, Jesus is not doing away with the Mosaic Laws found in the Old Testament; he is completing them, giving them a new and profound interpretation.

A New Perspective. Following upon his purpose in reinterpreting the commandments, Jesus goes on to describe six concrete ways in which his new law supersedes the old law. He uses a standard way of speaking: "You have heard it was said..." However, I say to you..." He first quotes the Mosaic injunction, then proceeds to give it a new, deeper, more "radical" interpretation. Note that the Mosaic Law remains valid, but as a Christian follower of Jesus, we must go deeper in fulfilling the demands of the law. It is not enough just to follow the external demands of the law; we must fulfill them wholeheartedly— with renewed motivation.

Allow me to paraphrase each of the six antitheses: (1) Moses said: "Do not murder." Jesus says: "Do not hate anyone or even be angry with another." (2) Moses said: "Do not commit adultery." Jesus says: "Avoid all lustful thoughts and illicit desires." (3) Moses said: "If you divorce, give your spouse a divorce notice." Jesus says: "Do not be the first to break the marriage relationship." (4) Moses said: "Make all your oaths in Yahweh's name." Jesus says: "Remember that any promise is always made before God." (5) The Mosaic Law asserted: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus says: "Always do good—even to those who oppose you." (6) Moses asserted: "Love your neighbor (meaning your fellow-Jew)." Jesus says: "Love even your enemies, for that is actually what God does. Then, you will be rewarded by God." Indeed, Jesus is setting a very high moral standard for us as his disciples!

Jesus' Claim. Note another striking fact: Jesus always says: "I say to you." This is very significant. Jesus is actually reinterpreting the God-given Mosaic Law, and he is doing it on his own authority! Who can validly reinterpret God's Law? Only God can do that. Thus, when Jesus says: "I say to you," he is claiming to act with God's authority, to be God himself. As Christians, we follow Jesus, because we truly believe that he is none other than God himself, incarnate in human flesh. Jesus' teachings are profoundly challenging! We strive to follow them with renewed hearts, always relying on God's abundant grace and mercy!

— Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

The ecumenism document of the Second Vatican Council, Unitatis Redintegratio, clearly affirms the value of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities. Indeed, there are authentic elements of what constitutes a "church" in various communities outside the Catholic Church; all should value and respect these genuine "ecclesial elements."

We are called to both recognize and appreciate our mutual gifts. Some examples are: Sacred Scripture, various sacraments, the life of grace, the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, the virtues of faith, hope and charity, and even certain church institutions. These mutual gifts can be put at the service of a variety of people; they can also enhance the effectiveness of mission and evangelization in today's world.

Other Christian communities may lack some of the structures that Catholics view as essential to being a church (e.g. the apostolic succession of bishops or a valid Eucharist). However, "the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation" (UR 3). Indeed, God uses these communities to save their members. Briefly stated, non-Catholic Christians are brought to salvation not despite their churches, but because and through them. Let us rejoice in God's magnanimous, merciful love and compassion!
**THE INTRODUCTORY RITES**

**Entrance Antiphon**
[Ps 31 (30):3-4]
(Recited when there is no opening song)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

**Greeting**
(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The Lord be with you. All — And with your spirit.

**Introduction**
(These [or similar] words may be used to address the assembly.)

P — Jesus tells us today that mere external observance of God’s law does not make us his true followers. Our observance of the divine law must spring from inner conviction. May our Eucharistic celebration make us grow in love, a love that is free, responsible, and self-giving.

**Penitential Act**

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord. All — For we have sinned against you.

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy. All — And grant us your salvation.

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. All — Amen.

P — Lord, have mercy. All — Lord, have mercy.

P — Christ, have mercy. All — Christ, have mercy.

P — Lord, have mercy. All — Lord, have mercy.

**Gloria**

All — Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King. O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**Collect**

P — Let us pray. (Pause) O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. All — Amen.

**THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**First Reading** [Sir 15:15-20]
(Sit)

Sirach tells us that we are free to choose between a life of faithfulness and a life of sin. But God, who knows everything, has prepared life for the virtuous and death for sinners.

**A reading from the Book of Sirach**

IF YOU CHOOSE you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too shall live; he has set before you fire and water to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him. Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power, and all-seeing. The eyes of God are on those who fear him; he understands man’s every deed. No one does he command to act unjustly, to none does he give license to sin.

— The word of the Lord. All — Thanks be to God.

**Responsorial Psalm** (Ps 119)

R — Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

1. Blessed are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who observe his decrees, who seek him with all their heart. (R)

2. You have commanded that your precepts be diligently kept; Oh, that I might be firm in the ways of keeping your statutes! (R)

3. Be good to your servant, that I may live and keep your words. Open my eyes, that I may consider the wonders of your law. (R)

4. Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes, that I may exactly observe them. Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart. (R)

**Second Reading** (1 Cor 2:6-10)

The wisdom of God is his loving plan to save us through Jesus. It is the wisdom, that proclaims the salvific merit of the cross of Christ.

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God’s wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory,
and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him, this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.
— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia [cf. Mt 11:25] (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [Mt 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37] (Short Form)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS SAID to his disciples: “I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with brother will be liable to judgment.

“You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow. But I say to you, do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”
— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — The spirit of God scrutinizes our inner thoughts and longings. Through the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the heavenly Father for our needs and those of others as we say.

R — Lord, hear our prayer.

C — That Church leaders may be like Jesus who is pure of heart and totally dedicated to the Father’s will, we pray: (R)

C — That our civil leaders may set examples of honesty, uprightness, and willing service, we pray: (R)

C — That we may come to know and love God more so as to obey his commandments willingly and joyfully, we pray: (R)

C — That we may shun anger and resolve conflicts, problems, and differences through dialogue and mutual respect, we pray: (R)

C — That we may be honest and make good our pledges and promises; that we may never accuse others falsely, we pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P — Heavenly Father, hear our humble petitions. Jesus your Son was totally dedicated to you. Help us to follow him who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface II of the Sundays in Ordinary Time

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours, he humbled himself and was born of the Virgin; by the passion of the Cross he freed us from unending death, and by rising from the dead he gave us life eternal.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)
P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

[Cf. Ps 78 (77):29-30]

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)
P — Let us pray. (Pause)

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, that we may always long for that food by which we truly live.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

Direct your people, O Lord, we pray, with heavenly instruction, that by avoiding every evil and pursuing all that is good, they may earn not your anger but your unending mercy.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (1) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All — Thanks be to God.