

My Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

Jesus starts today's readings by telling us that, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Jesus is reminding us that what we do, we do for the love of Him.

C. S. Lewis tells the story of an angel walking across Heaven with a torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. St Michael stopped him and asked him what he was doing. The angel said, "With this bucket of water I will put out the fires of Hell, and with this torch I will burn down the mansions of Heaven, then we will see who truly loves my Lord." Lewis reminds us that the fear of Hell, or the promise of Heaven, is not always strong enough to keep us from sinning. The only thing that is strong enough to keep us from sinning is to love God, and know we are loved by Him. When you and I realize how much we are loved we will do anything we can not to offend that love. I know with my Grandmother, I would rather go through almost anything before I would offend the wonderful love she showed me.

In the great loving relationship we have with God we come to the understanding that, in His love for us, He gave us the commandments. God did not give them to us to make our lives burdensome or to control us. I remember when I was teaching an 8<sup>th</sup> grade CCD class before I entered the seminary, I taught a lesson on the 10 Commandments and what they mean in our modern day life. I had a young lady raise her hand when I was done and I called on her. She looked at me and said, "You know you have just ruined all my fun." God gave us the commandments to help us to be happy here on Earth and prepare us to be happy in Heaven. They are guides to us to truly become what we were created to be, children of God.

My parents had rules for us while we were growing up. At the time I did not understand them and felt like they just wanted to make my life difficult. I could not understand why they would be more restrictive than a lot of my friends' parents. As I have gotten older I have come to understand how much love they must have had for me. They loved me so much, that they were willing to have me upset with them. They knew that the decisions I made yesterday would make my today, and the decisions I make today will determine my tomorrow. Thanks Mom and Dad for loving me that much. Thank you God for loving me even before I was created, and giving me a road map in the commandments to be happy today, and to find my way home to You.

God Bless you

Fr Tim