

From The Desk of Fr. Patrick

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus speaks words that are both comforting and challenging: *"I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill."* The people listening, expected religion to be about rules, what to do and what to avoid. But Jesus goes deeper. He moves the law from the outside to the inside, from behavior to the heart.

He says it is not enough simply not to kill; we must also let go of anger. Not enough to avoid adultery; we must guard our thoughts and intentions. Not enough to avoid lying; our simple "yes" or "no" must be trustworthy. Jesus is teaching that holiness is not about appearing good, it is about becoming good.

We see this in daily life. A person may never shout at their family yet carry silent resentment for years. Someone may never steal yet constantly compare and envy others. A worker may never lie openly yet bend the truth just enough to benefit themselves. Outwardly, nothing seems wrong, but inwardly peace is missing. Jesus wants freedom for us, and that freedom begins in the heart.

Saint Augustine once said, *"God does not ask what you have done, but from what love you have done it."* Christianity is not simply avoiding sin; it is allowing love to shape every action.

This Gospel also teaches integrity. Jesus says: *"Let your yes mean yes and your no mean no."* In a world of contracts, conditions, and fine print, the Christian should be a person whose word is trusted. Imagine how different our homes, workplaces, and parish would be if people knew: this person is honest, this person forgives, this person seeks peace first.

Today we also reflect on stewardship as we participate in the **Annual Catholic Appeal**. Our parish goal is **\$66,767**. The appeal supports the wider mission of the Church, education, charity, vocations, and care for those in need. When we give, we live what Jesus teaches: faith not only in words but in action. I am deeply grateful for your generosity, and I truly believe we can reach and even exceed our goal together.

I am grateful to our parish community for the wonderful retirement celebration for Fr. Hennessy last weekend. He was truly overjoyed by your presence and by the love you showed him. Please continue to keep him in your prayers as he begins this new chapter of his life.

May this Gospel remind us that Christianity is not minimal, it is transformational. Christ does not ask us merely to keep rules, but to become people whose hearts look like His: honest, faithful, merciful, and generous.

-Fr. Patrick