

**Sunday, February 19, 2023**

**The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

- 1) Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18
- 2) 1 Corinthians 3:16-23
- 3) Matthew 5:38-48

**FOCUS:** Strive for perfection in love.

Jesus expands on the law that his followers knew well. As God loves all people without partiality – *the bad and the good, the just and the unjust* – so are all who follow him to do. Certainly this can be difficult, but it is not impossible. For by Christ's sacrifice, we have been made children of the Father. With his help, and God's grace, we are capable of striving for the perfection in love to which we are called.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

In Leviticus, the Lord declares his statutes to Moses for the Israelites, calling them to holiness and love. In our second reading, Paul instructs the Corinthians, calling them to holiness as temples of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel from Matthew, Jesus preaches a new standard of love and justice, calling his followers to love their enemies.

**UNIVERSAL PRAYER**

PRIEST: The Lord calls us to imitate his love and holiness. With trust in God's goodness, let us offer our prayers this day.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Holy Spirit fortify them in their Gospel mission, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may the Gospel message of blessing and peace inform their work for justice in the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer at the hands of others, may God's grace give them courage in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may Jesus strengthen us as we seek to build God's kingdom here on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in faith, may they rejoice forever seeing God face to face in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, please hear and answer our prayers this day according to your holy will. Through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.