

Read

↪ Sirach 15:15-20
Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5,
17-18

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Matthew 5:17-37 or

5:20-22a, 27-28,

33-34a, 37

LIVING THE WORD

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 15, 2026



REFLECTION

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus challenges us to move beyond external compliance with God's rules to integrate virtue into every aspect of ourselves. True righteousness, he asserts, involves aligning our hearts with God's intentions, not just avoiding external actions out of shame or fear of punishment.

Modern neuroscience tells us that our brains build patterns based on our habits—the repeated things we do and think about. Christ's call to deeper transformation is a call to rebuild our patterns of thought and action to be centered around peace, forgiveness, honesty, and fidelity to one another. When our lives are transformed in these ways by God's grace, we are better able to follow God's will.

Let us invite Jesus into our every choice of thought and deed. Let us welcome him into our hearts so that he might transform us into his image. Let us be open to the Holy Spirit guiding us in a life of mercy, kindness, and faithfulness so that our habits reflect God's love to others.



ACTION

The media we surround ourselves with can influence our emotions and reactions, contributing to habitual thought patterns. This week, create a playlist of songs that promote peace, forgiveness, honesty, and fidelity. Pay attention to how listening to your playlist influences your mood and reactions.



“Holy Spirit Living Breath of God”—Keith & Kristyn Getty

<https://youtu.be/kDYjn-YdnD4>

❓ QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Can you think of examples where external actions might not reflect the true state of someone's heart or character?
- ❖ What are some of the voices and influences that have shaped your mental habits? Can changing some of those external voices help you shift your mental script?



February 15, 2026
**SIXTH SUNDAY
 IN ORDINARY TIME**

LECTIONARY #76A

Sirach 15:15-20

Psalms 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

**Matthew 5:17-37 or 5:20-22a, 27-28,
 33-34a, 37**

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount continues with specific teachings on the proper interpretation and understanding of the law, focusing on topics that include anger, adultery, divorce, and oaths. The location from which these new teachings of Jesus were given, a mountaintop, recalls for us the way Moses received the Ten Commandments on the mountain. Although this parallel is there, Jesus goes beyond what Moses did and establishes a new law that builds upon the old one to show the fullness of what God intended in it. He speaks with authority because he is the Son of God. He calls his followers to go beyond the external, tangible aspects of the law and transform their hearts to conform to God's will.

Q FOCUS: *The teachings of our faith help us to be in right relationship with God and with other people.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week, our first period of Ordinary Time for the liturgical year will come to an end. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Although it is not a holyday of obligation, many people attend Mass on this day and receive a cross on their foreheads that is marked in ashes. On Ash Wednesday, we also fast from food and abstain from eating meat. This day is a call to

repentance as we begin the penitential season of Lent. We enter into the desert with Jesus as we prepare for the commemoration of his death and resurrection. We will return to Ordinary Time after Lent and Easter Time.

Church Teaching Connection

"Jesus explains it with a series of antitheses between the old commandments and his new way of propounding them. He begins each time: 'You have heard that it was said to the men of old . . .', and then he asserts: 'but I say to you.' . . . And he does this six times. This manner of speaking made a great impression on the people, who were shocked, because those words: 'I say to you' were equivalent to claiming the actual authority of God, the source of the Law. The newness of Jesus consists essentially in the fact that he himself 'fulfils' the commandments with the love of God, with the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within him" (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Message, February 13, 2011).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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 his 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."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Jesus is always concerned with our actions and today's reading reveals that that concern is about more than just the external choices. He is concerned with our intention and what is going on in our hearts. Jesus builds upon the Jewish laws and reveals the fullness of God's intention with them, that he, as the Son of God, is able to communicate to us. He wants people to keep the laws not just for the sake of the law but for the sake of their own wellbeing and for God.

As young people, there are many rules that you have to follow. You have teachers, parents, and coaches all giving you instructions or rules to keep in your daily lives.

► **Why are rules and laws important?**

► **Why is it challenging sometimes to follow them?**

► **What makes it easier for you to follow the rules?**

Laws and rules are important because they give order and structure to a society and can ensure people's safety. They can also help maintain fairness and justice. When rules seem to not accomplish these things, they can be challenging to follow because we might feel that they aren't fair or just. When laws do accomplish those things, we might find it easier to go along with them. Understanding the intent or purpose behind a rule also helps us to follow them.

There are also rules within our Catholic faith. These rules are different than ones created in the secular world because they are built upon the teaching authority of the Church and its interpretation of Scripture, the witness of the apostles, and centuries of tradition. They are rules that flow out of our beliefs. Our beliefs are handed down to us from Jesus through the apostles and their successors (the bishops). Our worship also gives rise to our beliefs—how we pray to God in the liturgy tells us about what we believe. Understanding this background for the rules of the Church can help us to approach them in a more positive and accepting manner.

► **How can Church teachings give order to your life?**

► **How does the worship of the Church help you act in a way that is in keeping with your identity as a beloved child of God?**

Sometimes we can find ourselves just going through the motions of our faith. We might go to church because we "have to" but not really pay attention to what is going on. Even in these situations, Christ is still working through the sacraments and communicating God's grace to us. We have to be open to receive this grace and we do so by returning our attention to God and entering into prayer with our whole hearts. Today's reading, with Jesus' attention on the intention behind our actions, reminds us that we always have the opportunity to adjust our attitudes: we can work on entering more deeply into prayer, learn more about our faith by reading a book or asking questions, and make the choice to say yes to God in every moment.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 136.

Rules and laws help us to live healthy and safe lives, even within the Church.

The teachings of the Church are rooted in Jesus and the witness of the apostles that has been handed down to us.

Understanding the purpose of and intention behind our Church's teachings helps us to live them out more fully.

Act on the Word

Making Rules, Playing Games

For this activity, you will need several decks of standard playing cards, enough so that each group of two to four teens will have one deck. You will also need paper and pens.

Begin by briefly continuing the conversation from today's reflection on the Gospel about the importance of rules. Invite the teens to share any further thoughts they have on any challenges and any benefits they see to having rules, both in the secular realm and in the Church. How does understanding the reasoning behind certain rules and laws help them appreciate them better? After the teens have had a chance to reflect on these things, tell them that today's game will help them get a new, fun perspective on creating rules and following them.

Divide the young people into small groups of two to four people and tell them that they'll be creating a new card game. Give each group a deck of playing cards, a piece of paper, and a pen. Each group should come up with a list of rules for their group's card game. Some of the basic game play can be modeled on existing card games, with groups adding their own unique rules. For example, the group could use Go Fish as a model (players are trying to make matching pairs, can ask another player if they have the card they are looking for, and so on). Then they can add extra rules like every time a 2 is

played, the next player has to do a jumping jack. Each group will come up with a set of about ten rules for their game. They should write down their rules, making sure to clearly indicate how a player can win the game (like, whoever gets rid of all their cards first, or if someone draws a certain card). They should also note what the goals of the game are.

Once groups have finished writing their rules, it is time to play. Each group will be paired with another group to play the games (only one game is played at a time) and figure out the new rules. For example, Groups A and B will pair up and start by playing Group A's game, but Group B will not necessarily know Group A's rules at the beginning of the game. Group B will have to figure out some of the rules to Group A's game just by observing. If the game is taking too long, Group A can help Group B by explaining some (or all) their rules. If they wanted to, groups could include a bonus rule that deals with giving hints, such as "If a 5 is played, Group A will give Group B a hint to one rule." Allow groups to play for each one's game for about ten minutes before switching to the other group's game.

Closing Prayer

*O God of heaven and earth,
you sent your Son,
the Word made flesh
to teach us your ways
and to lead us to eternal life.
Grant us the wisdom
to know your law
and the courage to be its witness
to the end of time.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.