



## **7<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY of ORDINARY TIME** **YEAR C – February 24, 2019**

Our readings today speak to us today about the demands of love. The kind of love we are to have for God, for our neighbor and for ourselves. The first reading from the book of Samuel relates a story about David and Saul. David could have killed Saul who was trying to kill him, but he let him live. That's the kind of love God asks us to have for our "enemies".

At the time of David and the time of Jesus, the law allowed revenge. It was called the "Lex Talionis" – an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If you harm a member of my family, I will harm a member of yours. It was the law.

But Jesus said, "No more!" In the Gospel today (Luke 6:27-38) Jesus tells us, "Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you." That was a radical change for the people of his time and it is for some people in our time too.

The word used by Jesus for the word love is "agape". So, what does it mean? It doesn't mean you must invite your "enemies" to your house for dinner. It does mean 'do not seek revenge'.

There is a charming story about a boy and his little sister. Their mother ran into the bedroom when she heard her seven-year-old son scream. She found his two-year-old sister pulling his hair. She gently released the little girl's grip and said comfortingly to the boy, "There, there, she didn't mean it. She doesn't know that it hurts." He nodded his acknowledgment, and she left the room. As she started down the hall the little girl screamed. Rushing back in, she asked, "What happened? The little boy replied, "She knows now."

Revenge is sweet. But Jesus says, "Don't do that!" On second thought, is it sweet?

Father Mark Link tells a story about the Buddha. One day a man met Buddha and decided to see if Buddha practiced what he preached. The man began heaping all kinds of verbal abuse upon the great teacher. All the while, Buddha listened patiently. When the man ran out of things to say, Buddha said to him, "My son, if a man declines to accept a gift from another, to whom does the gift go.?" The man said scornfully, "Any fool knows that. It goes back to the giver!" "My son", said the Buddha, "You have just given me much verbal abuse. I decline to accept your gift."

It is said that he who seeks revenge should begin by digging two graves. Jesus is clearly against revenge, but he goes even further. He tells us we must forgive those who hurt us. Why would he say that? The reason is clear. There is no healing without forgiveness. Refusing to forgive is like drinking poison and expecting the other guy to die.

Father Mark Link explains what he calls the "Law of the Echo". "We get back from life exactly what we give. If we forgive, we will be forgiven. If we give, we will receive. If we love (agape) we will be loved. If we sing a song to others, they will sing a song to us."

**Revenge and Forgiveness.**



**Do you agree with Jesus?**