

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026

[Sirach 15:15-20; Psalm 119; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37]

The study of history gives us an awareness of what has already happened. Our Salvation History is documented in Holy Scriptures; what we know as the Bible. When St Paul was writing to the Corinthians nearly 2000 years ago, he described how the rulers of his day had missed for some the One they had longed to see and for others the signs of the times which pointed towards Jesus being a righteous and peaceful man. As he said, '*otherwise they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*'

I wonder when historians look back at the rulers of *our* days, what they will record as being significant. A look at the leaders of our ages in the few weeks since 2026 started, may show significant turning points in our domestic and international affairs. Our Prime Minister's judgement has been called into question several times, a former Prince of the Realm is under siege by journalists and having already withdrawn from public life is now preparing to move to a new home well away from prying eyes. Meanwhile, the current leader of one of our oldest allies has advised those living in Europe that we shouldn't depend on the USA to continue to defend us if we are threatened; at the same time applying pressure to take a country under their control; which is currently under the control of Denmark, another ally. If St Paul were alive today, I'm certain that he would be questioning whether the rulers of this age have been endowed with wisdom.

In the Gospel from St Matthew, we hear Jesus tell us that He has not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets **but to fulfil them**. Before diving into what Jesus said, I think a little bit of context is needed here. The Jew used the expression *the Law*, in four different ways –

[i] The Ten Commandments

[ii] The Pentateuch- the first 5 books of the Bible

[iii] The Law and the Prophets, to mean the whole of Scripture, which we would call the Old Testament.

[iv] The Oral or Scribal Law; at the time of Jesus, this was the most common meaning of '*the Law*'; and it was this Scribal Law which Jesus utterly condemned.

These Scribal Laws were the results of centuries of debate and refinement, where the scholars of the Jewish scrolls had dissected the Ten Commandments and the works of the Prophets to get as precise a meaning as they could for these documents. The result of this was not a simple set of rules which people could follow easily, but convoluted legal jargon, which the Scribes and Pharisees could find workarounds to; whilst condemning lesser educated followers.

When Jesus went through the Commandments, He was not making the Commandments more severe, He was telling us that we need to follow the **spirit of the law and not the letter of the law**. The letter of the law was what the Scribes and Pharisees came up with. The spirit of the law *is the essence of what God has asked us to obey*.

Jesus is asking us to live our lives more simply. If we seek the path which leads to Jesus, then we will be less likely to sin; because we will be satisfied with what we have and less likely to covet what is not ours. If we put God at the centre of our lives, then we will respect the Sabbath. If we are all honest with one another then there will be no need to swear an oath, because we will be able to trust one another.

Compare this with the leaders we have, who covet other lands because they can exploit the mineral wealth of other nations, making the rich, richer and exploiting the poor. Or, the leaders embroiled in scandal, who mislead or contort the truth to suit their own ambitions.

Jesus taught us all with his actions. He taught us how to live, how to love and how to serve. The leaders of our days and the days to come would do well to follow the example of Jesus, the Son of God, who got down on his hands and knees and washed the dirt from the feet of his followers, this is true leadership, this is servant leadership from the Servant King.

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCC 577-582: Jesus and the Law

CCC 1961-1964 the old Law

CCC 2064-2068: the Decalogue in the tradition of the Church¹

Please remember in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- The victims of human trafficking.
- Those attending the RCIA programmes and those attending the Rite of Election at the Cathedral on the 21st February.
- Those attending the Youth Alpha programme which is a prerequisite for the Confirmation programme in our Pastoral Area.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- The success of the forthcoming Pastoral Area Lent course on Prayer.
- Hans, who will be baptised this Sunday at St Bede's.

Deacon Tony

14th February 2026

¹ [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)