

# Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

## MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

# BACKGROUND CHECK

### SUNDAY READINGS:

Sirach 15:15-20

Psalms 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

I Corinthians 2:6-10

Matthew 5:17-37

### COMMENTARY

The richness of our spiritual inheritance from Judaism forms the backdrop to Jesus' mission that we are charged with continuing, with the light and strength of the Holy Spirit.

"Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven," Jesus teaches us in today's Gospel reading, referring to the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments. At the same time, Jesus shows us how to live those commandments in a way that obeys the spirit of the Law, going beyond the minimal requirements of the letter of the Law.

This is why we often find common ground on matters of justice, human rights, religious freedom and racial discrimination with our Jewish sisters and brothers, and also with the other Abrahamic religion, Islam.



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When the Catholic Church in Chile opened its offices for attending to the many victims of human rights abuses during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, we found open support for our efforts, including financial aid, from our fellow Christians of other Churches, and many of the country's Jewish faith communities, as well.



When critics questioned whether the Catholic Church was being infiltrated by people outside our faith, and manipulated, the Vicar of Solidarity—as the head of the Church's human rights offices and programs was known—responded that in emergencies, like the frequent and strong earthquakes Chile knew well, nobody asks what a person believes, first, before accepting the offer to help us look for survivors under the fallen walls of buildings.

May God help us take advantage of present opportunities to live in harmony with his revealed will, joining with and accepting the help of all people of good will, while we gratefully acknowledge the spiritual gifts of the People of the First Covenant in living out our mission, received from Christ, and actively oppose all forms of anti-Semitic actions and speech.

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## NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

**First Reading - Sirach 15: 15-20:** We live in the radical freedom to choose life, by obeying the law of Moses, according to the inspired writer, Ben Sirach--a teacher who insisted on the superiority of Jewish wisdom to Greek philosophy.

**Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34:** In a tone that is similar to that of our first reading, the Psalmist affirms a connection between one's life and the observance of the law of Moses with one's "whole heart" (vv. 2 and 34), using the language of solemn treaties.

**Second Reading - I Corinthians 2:6-10:** Paul uses the word "we", rather than "you" in his letter to the Christian community in the city of Corinth, appealing to their shared belief in the wisdom that comes from God's Holy Spirit.

**Gospel - Matthew 5:17-37:** Jesus' fulfillment of the Law of Moses affirms and establishes the Torah rather than nullifies it, reminding us today that there is an organic relation between Judaism and Christianity.

Notes and Commentary by by Fr. Bob Mosher,  
a member of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban.

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