

The Law as Mission Third Week of Lent Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:15 AM
Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19 (To demonstrate the goodness and the justice of God to bring change and transformation to the whole world.)

“I have not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

Ordinarily people don't think of law as something to be fulfilled. Law, rather, is something to be observed, respected, carried out, but not fulfilled. **So what's the idea of fulfilling the law?**

Well, it's easy to understand if we take into consideration the first reading and the psalm today. The first reading was from Deuteronomy chapter 4; the psalm was 147. Both of them speak of **the law as a privilege**. “No one else has a god as close to us as we have our God.” But along with this **intimate closeness** that the Israelites enjoyed came a **new responsibility**. It was to carry out the statutes of the Lord. For what purpose? So that the whole world would say, “No nation has a God like this.” **It was to demonstrate the goodness and the justice of God. That's why Israel was chosen.** They were chosen; they were given an intimate connection to God. God cared for them in many different ways, showed many signs and wonders of his special love for them, who were, after all, a very small and defenseless people. He made of them a great nation. But for a reason: so that by following his statutes they would impress the entire world with God's goodness and his justice. “For thus you will give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations who will hear of all these statutes and say, ‘This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.’”

Now the problem was that the people didn't always fulfill this. Here is now a promise that needs to be fulfilled. So the law is a type of promise if you understand it in this way. And that's what **Jesus came to fulfill, the promise that people could see the goodness of God and the justice of God.** And that's why he said, “Anyone who teaches others to disregard

even the smallest particle of the law will be called least in the kingdom.” He didn’t say be kicked out of the kingdom. He said **they would be least because they are not really observing the real meaning and purpose of it.** But who is going to be **greatest? The one who teaches and observes the whole thing and its meaning and its purpose.** It is ultimately **to bring change and transformation to the whole world.** It’s not just something to be observed. It’s not just something to be followed. It’s not just something to be obeyed. **It is truly a mission.**