

Reinterpreting the Torah Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, September 9, 2017 8:15 AM Col 1:21-23; **Lk 6:1-5** St. Peter Claver, priest (You have to look at intention. You have to look at purpose. You have to look at meaning.)

“Have you not read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry?”

Today’s reading is one of the many disputes in the New Testament on the topic of the Torah. And in this particular case **Jesus is reinterpreting the Torah based on human need.** The need to eat supersedes the literal requirements of Torah.

Now the Torah in this case was the **sabbath rest.** On the sabbath you are not to harvest. Technically this was harvesting, but isn’t exactly work. **Not only is it not exactly work, it’s something needed because the disciples were hungry.**

Now what is really at dispute here is the mind of God. **What is the mind of God?** And the Pharisees, through no fault of their own, interpreted the mind of God as they were taught to in a very literal way: God desires this or God demands that. **Jesus’ view** is, well, no, you can’t be so rigid. **You have to look at intention. You have to look at purpose. You have to look at meaning.** God means and intends people to eat. God does not desire people to be hungry, so that desire of God itself interprets the Torah. And in this way Jesus showed that he was familiar with the mind of God in a way that his opponents were not. And that is probably the most important point, that **Jesus took upon himself to interpret the Torah because he knew the mind of God** in an intimate and reliable way. And you can be sure that his opponents understood what he was saying that way, and doubtlessly resented it.