

**Fulfilling the Law**      Tenth Week in Ordinary Time      Wednesday, June 12, 2019      **2**  
**Cor 3:4-11; Mt 5:17-19**      (The Spirit gives life both through illumining the mind and strengthening the will.)

**“Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.”**

This a very interesting gospel in contrast to the letter of St. Paul, the first reading of today’s Mass. In that letter St. Paul is contrasting what he calls “the ministry of death” to the covenant of Christ. So that would be the law and the prophets. Now what is his point? His point is that the law was only able to tell people what was wrong with them, that’s why he calls it the “ministry of condemnation.” The idea is **all the law could do was condemn what’s wrong, tell people what’s wrong with them. But it couldn’t improve them, and they were helpless to respond to the requirements of the law.**

Now he is saying **in Christ** there’s something new, a new dimension has opened up, **a new power, a new grace, therefore a new potential for human life.** And **now people can really follow God.** In the past they could only be aware of how they weren’t following God. So this is now, this elucidates a little bit what is meant here “I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.” **Jesus is saying the law is the will of God, and now you are going to see what it looks like in his own life.**

Now another point, **Jesus did not literally fulfill the law. In fact literally he often broke it.** Take for example the sabbath: he was constantly working on the sabbath, so literally breaking the law; **but this was a fulfillment.** So we cannot think in simple black and white terms about any of this. **On one level the law is good because it’s teaching us what we should do, but then we can’t do it. Jesus comes to show us how to do it, but it isn’t literally what it says.**

So now believers have **in the person of Christ himself the model for life.** And this **includes the gift of the Spirit, who is our teacher and guide so that we too can look at the law and interpret it for our own time and place and do the will of God and accomplish the will of God through the Spirit, who both teaches and enables the will of God to be done.** And that is why St. Paul says that “the letter brings the death,” that is, the literal interpretation because it’s impossible; even Christ himself didn’t literally live it out, “**but the Spirit gives life.**” **It gives life both through illumining the mind and strengthening the will.**