

Cycle A

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary # 76

Reading I: Sirach 15: 15-20

The Book of Sirach is referred to as wisdom literature. In this particular passage the writer speaks of the importance of **obedience**. The specific **obedience** the writer speaks of is living according to the commandments given to us by God. We have a choice to make each and every day and we have the opportunity to be **obedient** and wise or disobedient and foolish. The issue at hand is that of sin and free will. With free will we cannot blame our turning away from the commandments or straying away from what is right with God. We have a choice and are capable of acting loyally to God's will, and being **obedient** or not.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 2: 6-10

Saint Paul speaks of **obedience** as being a process of maturation. It makes sense that as a person truly grows and matures the person would have a greater understanding of their responsibility for things they ought to do and things that should be avoided. Maturation and growth in the spirit of God demands a concerted effort on the part of each individual. It is a process that involves successes and failures, with the failures serving as an opportunity to grow and mature with the assistance of humility. Jesus, in his humility, is **obedience** in its most perfect form.

Gospel: Matthew 5: 17-37

It should not surprise us that Jesus goes beyond the requirements of the laws of the Old Testament, even while saying they need to be observed. In this section of Saint Matthew's gospel Jesus fleshes out a deeper meaning and intent of the commandments. For example when he speaks of the sin of murder, the taking of another's life, he speaks of it as including the diminishment of a person's life by harsh words or actions. Likewise Jesus speaks of taking the commandments beyond the *thou shalt not* to another level of understanding. The level that speaks of the fact that in the greatest commandment *to love* we are called to go far and above the stated words of the commandments and enter into the spirit of the commandments. This is true **obedience**



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



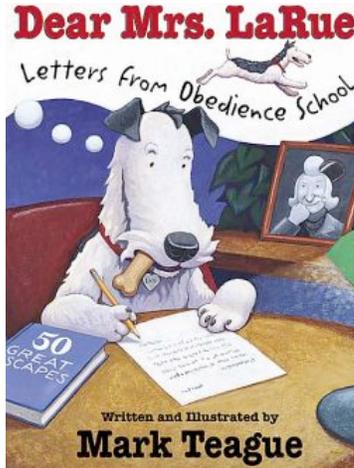
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School

This book will have everyone howling yet learning a about the importance of obedience along the way. After numerous incidences of bad behavior, Mrs. LaRue sends her dog Ike to obedience school. Ike, however, is highly insulted and sees the school as a prison. His daily letters complain of imagined indignities and exaggerated tales of mistreatment. Mrs. La Rue loves Ike but wishes him to act more responsibly and to be **obedient**. The parallel here may allow students to see that we are all called to be obedient so that life may run smoothly for all involved. Ike can represent each of us when we rather make excuses for not being who we are called to be than accepting responsibility for our actions. The story also addresses the fact that children and others enter into comparison in order to mollify our own guilt. Ike writes to Mrs. LaRue ... *you should see the other dogs, they are the BAD dogs!* This is an entertaining and hilarious story that drives home the many excuses we humans contrive for not accepting responsibility and being disobedient.

Activity

The students will enter into a role play to help them understand different points of view. In the role-play the students will also identify the importance of being obedient and accepting responsibility for particular actions. Have the students act out:

- The confrontation between Mrs. La Rue and Ike when she decides to send him to the Igor Brotweiler Canine Academy.
- The incident when Mrs. LaRue discovers that Ike has eaten the chicken pie she was saving for dinner.
- The incident when Ike chases Mrs. Hibbin's cats onto the fire escape in the middle of winter.
- An obedience class at the school in which Miss Klondike gets exasperated with Ike who refuses to cooperate.

Dear Mrs. LaRue

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character
education
activity

Obedience is an interior decision that will direct our actions or inactions in life. Obedience is found best in following the commandment to love one another.

Obedience calls each person to know and understand that the obeying of rules is for the protection of individuals and the community at large.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Look at the Ten Commandments and see how you might make them more meaningful by going beyond the words of the commandment. You may wish to involve a parent in this activity. For example, take the commandment that *Thou shalt not lie*. That commandment would also include and involve not withholding information or not telling the complete story when asked about an event. By not telling the complete story we would not be acting in **obedience** to that commandment.

Look Feel Know Act

Think of a time when you were disobedient and the consequences of that disobedience. How did you feel when you found out that your disobedience caused someone to be hurt, disappointed or angry? Taking that same situation and recognizing the difficulty it caused you and others, what would have been the better or the right thing to do in relationship to the commandments that you did not follow?

Look at each of the commandments and ask yourself which of them is the most challenging for you to follow. Often times there is one thing that may trip us up and that's what we have to pay attention to. Learning and practicing the spirit of the commandment will help us develop behaviors that will be helpful to us, better for the community and most importantly, helpful in developing a closer relationship with God and God's commandments.

In *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School* our little friend Ike the dog becomes a funny way for us to look at ourselves and to recognize that we can be drawn into making all kinds of excuses for not being **obedient** or responsible for our actions. He also shows us how we may rail against corrective measures that are imposed on us to correct a behavior that is not good or appropriate.

Pray that you will always see the commandments as friends who will guide you to live a life of goodness. Ask Jesus to help you in making all decisions and assist you in choosing the kindest of words and the most loving of actions each and every day.



closing
tool



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