

Homily – Catholic Seniors Conference

February 24, 2018

Today's readings offer us both comfort and challenge.

Moses is talking to God's people about the covenant that God is offering to them: I will be your God, and you will be my people. Who would refuse such an offer?! However, those who enter into this covenant have to be willing to listen attentively to God's word and to respond accordingly – every day of their lives. As the People of God, we are to observe all his commandments, including honoring elderly mothers and fathers, respecting life, telling the truth always. . .

Jesus sums up all of God's commandments in two verses: Love God with all your heart and soul and spirit. And love your neighbor as yourself. We have probably heard this thousands of times, and it is both a comfort and a challenge. Let's be honest: it is often easier to love God than to love our neighbor! The challenge is even greater when Jesus tells us: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." We may not precisely think of people who hurt us, disagree with us, refuse to talk with us as "enemies." But we may treat them as though they are – and vice versa. Loving someone as God commands us does not mean that we necessarily have warm

feelings about her or him. Loving others – according to God’s word – is to be concerned with their well-being. Humanly speaking, reconciliation may be impossible. But we are still challenged to be concerned with the other person’s well-being. Sometimes all we can do is pray for someone.

We live in a time of deepening divisions and polarization in our country and, at times, even within the Church. Because of partisan politics some families can no longer dine together on special occasions. Neighbors refuse to talk with one another. To break this impasse, we need to engage in dialogue – listening to one another without making judgments, listening to another’s concerns and feelings, trying to understand the other’s viewpoint. Dialogue is only possible when mutual trust can be attained. Trust, in turn, demands that both parties tell the truth. There is so much disinformation, misinformation, and outright lying today – leading us further apart, removed from reality, shredding the fabric of our society.

Today, let us renew our covenant with God and allow the power of God’s enduring love to work through us towards reconciliation, harmony, and unity. This is a powerful challenge, but the Holy Spirit will give us the wisdom and courage that we need!