

Be Holy
October 25, 2020
Proper 25A

First Reading ~ *Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-18*

YHWH told Moses to tell the entire Israelite community these things:

Be holy, for I, YHWH, am holy.

You must revere your mother and father. You must keep my Sabbaths. I am YHWH. Do not turn to idols or make images of gods for yourself. I am YHWH.

When you reap the harvest of your fields, do not cut the grain to the very edges of your field, or gather in all the gleanings of your harvest. Nor are you to completely strip your vines or pick up the fallen fruit. Leave the extra grain and fruit for the poor and the alien (the stranger, the foreigner) to gather for themselves. I am YHWH.

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not cheat your neighbor. Do not swear by my name with the intent to deceive, for if you do, you profane my name. I am YHWH. Do not oppress your neighbors or rob them. Do not hold back the hired hand's wages until the next day. Do not insult deaf people, or put obstacles in the way of blind people. Revere YHWH, your God.

Do not render an unjust judgment. Do not show partiality to the poor or give honor to the great. Judge your neighbor with fairness. Do not go about slandering others. Do not profit by the blood of your neighbors. I am YHWH. Do not nurse hatred for a neighbor. If you are angry with your neighbor, speak frankly about it, to avoid storing up ill feelings. Never seek revenge or hold a grudge toward your people. You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am YHWH.

Second Reading ~ *Matthew 22:34-40*

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, an expert on the Law, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?' Jesus answered, "'You must love the Most High God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

Third Reading ~ *adapted from Sister Joan Chittister and Rowan Williams in
"Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia For All That Is"*

If holiness were a characteristic like others, some might have more, some less; and you might either be envious of another person's holiness ("I wish I had fair hair and holiness like her"), or set out to acquire holiness by effort. The awful paradox about holiness- which is why I should probably stop writing about it right now –is that the harder you try and the more self-conscious you get about it, the more massively unlikely it is that you'll get the point of it, never mind sharing it. To use an overworked metaphor, holiness is as little a characteristic of a person as light is of a window. Put a window in a particular place and the light comes through; put a person in a particular place and God comes through.