

Dear Friends,

As I ponder on the readings for this weekend, I am reminded of the beauty of our Catholic faith. At every Mass, we have the readings taken from scripture that come alive every time we read or listen to them as the Word of God delivers a different message every time, we encounter it. The readings this weekend are strong and clear in their message. They speak to something that should be very familiar to all of us but that we sometimes ignore. They speak of the importance of keeping the commandments. They speak of the consequences of breaking these commandments.

Rules are created to give structure, order, to prevent bad habits and we learn of good and bad consequences to our actions. In our readings today, we are reminded of the Commandments, the rules. I often encounter people that are familiar with them but think that they don't apply to them. These same people can perceive these rules as outdated, but they're not. They are essential and still greatly needed in our world today.

We all follow laws or rules everyday whether we like to or not, they help keep our society and families in order. I have three teenagers and believe me, if we didn't have rules, our home would be chaos! Now, to think of it, the times when we don't stay true to the rules of our home, there's chaos. Something simple, like who's turn is it to do the dishes can quickly turn into a gladiator match. What could have been a ten-fifteen-minute task can turn into an hour of debate, battle, then remorse and forgiveness. Only to have to complete the original task anyway.

We all do this, we know what's right, what's wrong. We know the rules, but much like in my home, we debate and try to defend our reasons for breaking the rules anyway. After, we may face the consequences of our actions and feel remorse, but here's where the choice is most important. After breaking the rules, do we feel remorse and repent? Or do we reconcile, like our Gospel this week tells us? Do we humble ourselves and make amends?

God is so merciful and loving. He's given us this Catholic faith which has gifted us the beauty and graces of the sacraments. The sacraments are there to help us stay the course. They help us be part of God's family through the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), to salve our brokenness and illness of body, heart, and mind through the sacraments of healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick), to love Him and each other through the sacraments of service (Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders). These all help us stay true to His path and to follow the rules.

With Lent starting just ten days away, we can start pondering the ways we can enter fully into this Liturgical time and grow closer in our relationship with God through the sacraments, especially in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. We have many opportunities for Reconciliation throughout the week here at St. Anthony's, also, save the date of March 20th at 7:00pm for our parish Reconciliation, Adoration, and Song.

Let us come to every Mass ready to receive Him in the Eucharist with a clean and open heart. I leave you with this verse from the Psalm this weekend. Have a blessed week!

*"Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes, that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart."*

In God's Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dulce Casanova". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dulce Casanova
PA for Liturgy & Hispanic Ministry