

Behold I make all things new!

A man stayed after Mass two weeks ago and said he wanted to talk. I said fine ... and he asked for prayer because he was going to do something he really didn't want to do.

For a moment I was alarmed wondering what exactly he meant by that.

But he quickly explained that he was taking his ex-wife back to court to garnish her wages saying that she really did him wrong and he felt justified in doing this.

I said to him, "*Why don't you just let it go and move forward with your life ... don't look back ... but just look ahead to a new beginning.*"

Well, he didn't want to hear that ... in fact he got quite upset and shouted,
"The Bible says, 'an eye for an eye'."

I responded, "*No it doesn't!*" **But he turned quickly and barged out the door!**

If only he had stayed and given me the chance, I would have showed him the 4 references in Scripture to the expression ... "an eye for an eye."

**Three are in the Old Testament: Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy.
One is in the New Testament ... Matthew.**

In reading these 4 citations in the Bible,
we get the chance to see **a difference** between the Old and New Testaments.

Whereas the Old Testament spoke about retaliation as being acceptable ... Jesus overrode that idea with a new directive in the New Testament.

St. Matthew records Jesus as saying,
*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'
But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow."*

Jesus is saying ... it's no longer acceptable to justify your actions by old practices, you are not to seek retribution for offenses ... revenge is mine.
As for you, I am now giving you a new directive ... that you are to follow!

Jesus goes on in Matt. 5, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father."*

**Wow! New teachings ... in the New Testament ...
New directives ... coming right from Jesus ... who is God incarnate.**

That was what **Matthew** recorded ... **John** records **similar words** in his Gospel today where after **Judas** left the table at **the Last Supper**,
Jesus says, “*I give you a new commandment: love one another.*”

What **kind of Commandment** did **Jesus** give us? A **New Commandment!**

While Jesus often reiterated **the 10 Commandments** given by **His Father** ...
He also gave us a **New Commandment** ... a **new Commandment** ... of **love!**

Whereas before God said ... “*Love your neighbor as yourself*” ...
Jesus now says ... “*Love one another as I love you.*”

This takes **the love** we are to share with our neighbors to a **whole new level!**

We love with an imperfect love ... while **God** loves with a perfect love.
And **now Jesus** is calling us to love like that!

As God calls us to Himself ... **He** calls us to love the way He loves ...

- Calling forth a new level of richness ...
- A new level of completeness ...
- A new level of holiness!

Is this something **we can do?** **Yes ... but** not by ourselves.

To love as God loves, we need God’s help.
That’s why Jesus gave us **the Holy Spirit** and **the Holy Eucharist!**

It’s only by having the perfect love of God alive in us **that we can love as He loves.**

And so, on **the very night** that **Jesus** gave us **His New Commandment** ...
He also gave us the way that we could experience His love in in a superior way.

It was **there at the Last Supper**, that He established a New Covenant with us ...
A **New Covenant** ... that would empower us to keep ... His **New Commandment.**

Recall how during **the Last Supper**, which was **the Jewish Passover Meal**,
Jesus lifted up the chalice filled with wine and spoke these solemn words,
“*This is the Chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant.”*

In doing this, **Jesus** took the **Old Covenant** ...
where He regularly renewed His family bond with them by the blood of animals ...

and fulfilled it, transformed it, and replaced it with the **New Covenant**
where He would renew His family bond with them ... by **His own precious blood.**

You see, there are many New things in the New Testament.

For example, on Easter Sunday we heard St. Paul describe Baptism saying,
*“So that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might live in newness of life.”*

And in our **Second Reading** today from the **Book of Revelation, John records**
seeing Jesus, seated on His throne, and saying, “Behold, I make all things new!”

This one statement alone should fill us with great joy.

Do you like new things? New car, new home, new phone, new toy ...

Do you like things being made new? Your car, your hairdo, your wound, your smile

By saying “Behold, I make all things new!” ,

Jesus is saying that no matter what sins we may have committed,

He has the power to forgive them;

and **regardless of the pain and suffering that we have experienced in this life,**

Jesus has the power to put an end to them ... and make you new again.

He demonstrated this power by raising His scourged, crowned, pierced and crucified body from the dead ... and appearing to many in a glorified resurrected body.

This making all things new is a part of God’s plan for the future as John also saw,

“a new heaven and a new earth.

And the holy city,

a new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God.”

Great **newness** has already taken place with **Jesus’ Paschal mystery,**
for on **the day** that Jesus died, the **veil of the Temple** was torn in two,
marking a new way that man would worship God ...

not by offering the blood of animals ...

but by offering the blood of Jesus, the unblemished Lamb of God.

This would become the new and eternal sacrifice acceptable to the Father.

And **newness** sprang forth from the bleeding side of Christ as **God established**
a new community of believers ... His Church ... that would grow into a
worldwide family ... now numbering some 2 Billion people.

We heard reference to this in **Acts today** where **Paul and Barnabas**

*“called the Church together and reported what God had done with them
and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”*

Yes, newness is all over the New Testament!

Right before Jesus died, He instituted a new way for Him to be present to us.

There at **the Last Supper**, Jesus miraculously changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

Then He gave them the power to perform this same miracle to men ... so that ... to this day ... some 2000 years later ... we still have Jesus truly presence with us.

It's in the **Mystery of the Mass** that we have a new access to Him ...
And indeed fulfills what the evangelist John heard pronounced from the throne in a loud voice: "Behold God's dwelling is with the human race!"

And **indeed** it is!
He is here among us spiritually and sacramentally on our journey to Heaven.

And through the Eucharist, Jesus has given us a new intimacy with Him.

You see, He not only made Himself present sacramentally to the Apostles at the Last Supper by transubstantiating the Bread and Wine into His Body and Blood ...

but then Jesus instructed His Apostles to take and eat and drink of them!.

Now Jesus was not just with His people ... He was in His people!
This was indeed a new level of intimacy!

Jesus gave us so many new things!

He gave us a new understanding of who God is - that God is **Trinity**. 3 Persons in 1.

Jesus gave us a new image of God's desire for us ...

that **God wants our salvation, not our condemnation!**

How wonderful!

The all-powerful God delights in making all things ... including us ... new.

Let's allow this truth to extend our Easter joy! Not only do we have **redemption**,
but through Jesus, we have a new and everlasting covenant with God,

We have a new beginning in grace through **Baptism and Confession**.

We have a new way to worship God and be nourished by Him in the **Eucharist**

And it's all based on **Love ... the love of God** for us!

And we revere that Love when we follow Jesus' New Commandment

"As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

What a strong witness this is to the overpowering love of God ...

In fact, **Jesus** said,

“This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Does this leave room for retaliation ... to take an eye for an eye?

No ... it does not!

Does this leave room for you to carry hatred for an enemy?

No ... it does not!

Jesus has given us a New Commandment ... *“to love one another as He loves.”*

Through the Sacraments we have everything we need to do this

So let's strive every day to love like God ...

It will give Him great glory and witness to our union with Him

For as the Song goes ...

*“Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes they'll know we are Christians by our love”.*