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February 20, 2022

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23 | 1 Cor 15:45-49 | Lk 6:27-38

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Have you heard about the *Civilize It!* initiative? The U.S. bishops launched a campaign to encourage civil dialogue during the contentious 2020 election. Unfortunately, the divisiveness in our nation, and even within the Church, has shown no signs of subsiding, leading the bishops to reboot the campaign last fall. The bishops encourage every Catholic to pledge to be a force for charity, clarity, and creativity in our divided world. Today's Gospel shows us how to do that, starting with the Golden Rule. What strikes me – and challenges me – are the specific examples that remain relevant 2,000 years later: *Love your enemies and do good for them; stop judging; stop condemning; give.* Building on last Sunday's account of the beatitudes, Luke provides us a prescription for how to live a moral and happy life, one that reflects those who "bear the image of the heavenly one."

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I am thankful to have people in my life who bring out the best in others, and certainly bring out the best in me. I would guess we can each point to others who have guided and encouraged us: A teacher, a dear friend, a favorite aunt, a neighbor or coach. Today's readings encourage us to be that person for others, even when it's hard. Nobody said being a witness to Christ would be a cake walk! Fortunately, we can turn to prayer and the Scriptures for encouragement. For me, it may begin with small steps, such as listening to those with whom I disagree, not getting drawn into social media debates, and being more generous with my time. As we reflect on today's readings, perhaps we can each choose one change we would like to make or challenge we want to accept as we move into the week and ask God to help us put it into practice.

ACT Praise God each day this coming week. And then challenge yourself to offer a compliment to one person every day as well. Praising God and others puts us in right relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters.