

“You have heard how it was said.....But I say this to you...” We are on the cusp here of two worlds. Jesus is part of a religious tradition that goes right back to the mists of time, *a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known.*

“You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors....” Jesus doesn’t just appear out of the blue. He is not some kind of spiritual aberration. He is quite consciously and definitely the descendant of Abraham and Moses, of David and Solomon, of Isaiah and Jeremiah. *“Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets.”* He went to the synagogue every Sabbath and to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover. He a devout and faithful Jew. *“Not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved.”* The Torah, the Law, as revealed to Moses is the Law of God and is valid for ever.

“But”, and here is the crossover, the reinterpretation. The re-appropriation of that Law is a new and radical way, *“I say this to you”*. Yes, the Law says, *“You must not kill.....”* but I say, *“You must not even get angry.”* Yes, the Law says, *“You must not commit adultery.”* But I say to you, don’t even look at somebody, or think of somebody in a lustful or predatory way. Yes, the Law says, *“You must not break your oath,”* ...but I say to you make every word you utter, every ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ completely honest and truthful.

Jesus is not offering a new teaching. He is digging deeper into the ancient teaching. Yes what Moses taught is totally valid but this is a different world, a different time, a different context. The ancient teaching must not become ossified in endless rules and regulations. The ancient teaching must be brought back to life in a new way. The Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand. What matters is the human heart. This is where murder, adultery and dishonesty first take place. This is where repentance and renewal are urgently required.

We, too, live on the cusp of two worlds, not the cusp of the Old Testament and the New, but the cusp nonetheless of two very different understandings of church and faith. The Church of our ancestors had everything sorted: Catholic Baptism and a Catholic education, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, no sex before marriage and an answer to every moral question, Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, a Catholic funeral and a Catholic burial, plenty of Masses for the dead, and always, doing what Father says.

*“You have learnt how it **was** said....But I say this to you...”* We may not be too keen on the world we now inhabit, but it is what it is, and it is this world here and now, post-Christian, post-modern and post-truth which we must evangelise. The Faith of our Fathers needs new life and new expression. It’s what Pope Francis is all about. It’s what we all need to be about, digging deep, honesty as to who we are and where we are rediscovering and renewing a religion of the heart, making the faith of our Fathers a living option for our children and grandchildren.

“You have heard how it was said...” Obey God’s law. *“ ... but I say this to you...”* Experience the Law as mercy and love in the depths of your being, *the wisdom predestined for **our** glory.*

