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As we renew our knowledge and deepen our understanding of all the instructions of the Lord, and then the Apostles, down through the Desert Fathers, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, so many saints up to our days, we renew an ancient teaching of what is the proper way of living, so that our lives become a golden road, and as we make our way through life, we produce fruit which lasts in a world that's very difficult, and as I mentioned, we would talk about the art of living, the art of war, the art of unity, and the art of dying.

And it's time to talk about the art of war. That's a pretty big name for you and I, who are kitchen table people. We could also call it the art of opposing that which is wrong.

Although the art of war, even in recent months, catches the attention of Popes and Presidents as they argue publicly over what is the theory of the just war. So we're in good company with Presidents and Popes. Father Jack was talking yesterday about the children in the sandbox having fun until they both wanted the same toy, and the different ways that that can escalate, and thank God, Daddy took off his shoes and socks and got in the sandbox and played with them.

It reminds me of two other brothers, Cain and Abel, when jealousy sprung up among them. Cain killed Abel. Our father has come into our sandbox, so to speak.

Our God has come to help us by walking our way with us, but we're not children anymore. We can do much worse things than throwing sand. We are all due east of Eden.

The book of Genesis tells us that after the sin of pride and Adam and Eve were banished, they were put out of paradise to the east. We are east of Eden. And a seraph was placed at that gateway so that Adam and Eve could never go west and go back in by force.

Our journey is to keep going east in the way that our Lord taught us following a golden road until we reach paradise by a different way. Here is the list of the first four sins of the Bible. Pride, jealousy, murder, and the lie to cover it.

Abel, where is Cain? Where is your brother Abel? How do I know, Lord? Am I my brother's keeper? St. John Paul II put a lot of focus on this slippery slope, how fast we fall down a terrible chute. How fast. And Satan loves it.

Genesis warns us. Satan is crouched like a lion waiting for you to misplace your setting, your footing, and he will tear you to shreds with his teeth. Our concern, part of the signs of the times which are not beneficial and not a blessing, are the radicalized depths of division and argument and hatred in our world.

And you and I want to be useful. One thing which is very clear after Cain killed his brother, Cain was worried that he might also be killed and God put upon his forehead the mark of Cain so that he would not be killed. In the story I told you the other day of the bandit who killed my friend and then who needed my help to save his life, and when I told you how hypocritical I felt having murder and revenge in my heart and raising up the Eucharist, the Holy Bread at Mass, and I thought I should stay away from priesthood and I should stay away from Mass until I'm clean.

And a wise friend said to me, with the kind of sickness you have, it's a deep spiritual sickness, our Lord didn't look at anger as a behavior problem. Our Lord looked at anger as a soul sickness and so my friend said to me, you have never needed the Eucharist more than you do now. Lift up your contradictions to the Lord.

Lift up this suffering to the Lord. Our Lord can do other things with it. How rooted we have to be in the Eucharist and in the sacraments as Father Jack was saying yesterday.

Yes, we turn to the Lord, we read the Bible, we listen to Psalms, but Jesus is covenanted to us in the sacraments. It's through the sacraments, the grace, the living water keeps coming to us to refresh us. And so, the same way that Father Jack said, we're very binary, here's the law, there's the behavior, here's the code, here's the canon, there's the violation, this or that, we're very binary and we've lost the ability to be poetic and mystical, which is all the space in between the thin space and somehow in my continuing to lift up the Eucharist and to lift up my brokenness in the Eucharist, the Lord helped me to see figuratively the mark of Cain on the bandit who had killed my friend and by seeing the mark of Cain on his forehead, I was able to help him.

This is spiritual power. Here is our problem. Something terrible happens to you that was terrible for me.

Something terrible happens to you, terrible. You were beaten, you were abused physically or sexually, you were humiliated and outed on the Internet and shamed, you were raped

once, something terrible happens to you, your daughter dies of a terrible disease, something terrible happens to you. And then we're filled with anger.

And the Bible says, don't get angry, it's a sin. And we're filled with judgment. Judgment.

The one who killed my friend was wrong. That's a judgment. He was wrong.

And then the Bible says, well, don't judge or you're going to be judged. Really? Well, what are we supposed to do? What are we supposed to do? We can't get mad and we can't judge. What are we supposed to do? What we're supposed to do is learn from the Lord by deepening our understanding, as Father Jack said, we have to graduate from kindergarten catechism and we have to understand our faith as it was really taught by the Lord.

So here's a simple question. Did our Lord ever judge? He certainly judged. He judged scribes and Pharisees and called them rotting tombs and sepulchers.

He certainly judged. He went into the temple and turned everything upside down, screaming and yelling and whipping with ropes. Our Lord judged.

Was our Lord angry? He was angry then. And when our Lord was going into the temple, he passed a fig tree and he was hungry. And there were no figs on it, and that made him mad.

And when he finished turning everything over in the temple, the temple, which reminded him of the fig tree, all show, plenty of leaves, beautiful tree, but empty of fruit. And for him, that's what the tabernacle and the temple had become, showing, but nothing. Talking heads, dead inside.

And after he tumbled everything inside the temple and walked past that fig tree again, he cursed it and it shriveled up. Tell me our Lord was never mad. Commentators will say things like, well, it wasn't fig season.

And then St. Matthew will tell you in the story, it was fig season. How do we figure that out? I haven't yet, but I'm too young, even at 73, to know everything. In time, we understand all things.

What kind of judgment did our Lord have? Because our Lord judged and we have to judge. If the Bible tells us, I set before you good and bad, life and death, and I beg you to choose good and life. Well, if we don't distinguish between good and bad, then how do we choose? We must judge what is good and what is bad.

And if we never get angry, how do we defend the offense against goodness? So we have to understand what this meant for Jesus. Judgment for Jesus was moral discernment. Judgment for Jesus was not, you think differently than me, I get on my high horse, I rear my high horse to be even taller, I pull out my sword, I defame you, I destroy you.

That's not it. Our Lord discerned what is moral, and he opposed it with love. You want to define what anger was for our Lord? For our Lord, anger was love opposing evil.

This is what anger was. It was never because his feelings were hurt, it was never because somebody stole his lunch. His anger was whenever he saw injustice or evil causing suffering in the people, he could not stand it.

He had love that opposes wrong, but it was always love. And when your mother and father raised you with love, and whenever they disciplined you, they disciplined you with love that was opposing the wrongness, but it was always love. At least with the Lord, it was always love.

This is what we have to bring to the world. This is what we have to bring to the table. Mystics call the anger of Jesus, listen to this beautiful expression, love under pressure.

What a beautiful phrase, love under pressure. I'm going to start using that now. When I get angry at somebody, you better get out of my way, I feel love under pressure.

But it's what it is, always love. So absolutely yes to our moral discernment. It's not the kind of judgment our Lord was condemning.

Absolutely yes to our opposing evil in a way that has love in it. Absolutely yes. So our Lord gives us all of this advice.

Turn the other cheek, go the extra mile. You want to know why? Because when you're angry and you're heated up, you're sending off adrenaline and cortisol, and the more you whip around everything in your mind, the worse it's getting for you, and if you don't back off, you're going to commit a crime of passion, and that stands on the penal code, a crime of passion. There's less punishment for it because you're less in it.

You are pirated by your hormones. When you turn the other cheek and go the other mile, you're causing the five-minute breather, which is the half-life of adrenaline, and you're in a much better state to try to re-engage with what you're trying to accomplish. Cortisol takes a lot longer to go down, at least an hour, so don't think you're home safe just because you took a prayerful pause and now are trying to take up your cause again.

Our Lord said, be quick to forgive, settle with your opponent very fast, and don't let the sun go down on your anger. What does this mean? Let me tell you what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean that you deny the harm that was done.

What it means is you refuse to be ruled by the hurt and harm that has happened to you. You refuse to be ruled by it. When you forgive the moral debt the other person owes you, they owe you an apology.

They owe you the damage. That was wrong. But they might never apologize. They might not care to apologize. They might not care that it hurt you. It doesn't matter.

You forgive their moral debt. I'm not waiting for that anymore. On the inside, you forgive the moral debt.

What does that do for you? It frees you so that you can pursue both reconciliation and even judgment in a court with a prayerful calmness that you are not the slave of wrath. We cannot serve two masters. We cannot.

You cannot serve both wrath and wisdom. You cannot. And our Lord is telling us how to back off, to return a curse with a blessing, and to find a way in our heart not to endlessly cycle, cycle, obsess, repeat the narrative of what happened and what we're owed, but to back off inside and pursue outside in a way of freedom what must be done next.

It takes a lot of inner strength to do this. We keep hearing the instruction of Jesus, Be the last one. If you're the leader, be the servant.

Less is more. Sooner or later, you have to wonder, what are we being asked to be, wimps? Are we supposed to be floor mops in the face of all of these problems? I don't think so. There is a strength that comes from yielding, a strength that comes from not having to have your way, but to find a way.

That strength is like water. What yields more than water? You can't even hold it in your hands. It leaks out through all your fingers.

Water will take any form you want to give it. Put it in a heart-shaped cup, it takes the form of a heart. Put it in a pitcher, it takes the form of a pitcher.

Put it in an hourglass, it takes the form of an hourglass. You want it to have no form? Throw it on the ground, it'll have no form at all. Water yields.

Well, what do you think carved the Grand Canyon? Over a long, patient time, water carved the Grand Canyon. Water is a powerful force, and grace is a powerful force, and grace works slowly with charity and with calmness and with wisdom, and we are called, believe it or not, through the length of our days to carve canyons in our life, canyons of goodness, canyons to the glory of God, and this is how we do it. We do it through finding this spiritual strength.

Go the extra mile. Shake the dust off of your feet. Go forward prayerfully.

Once when our Lord said, love your neighbor as yourself, the disciples said, who is our neighbor? And we got the beautiful story of the good Samaritan. But when our Lord said, love your enemy, no one said to him, who is our enemy? And so we have no story of who is our enemy, but I would like to give you one. It's a little bit more than two years ago, a young American missionary couple 21 and 22 years old were brutally killed by bandits in Haiti, very near where I am.

I was part of the team, a big part of the team, to talk with bandits, at least to recuperate their bodies for their mother and father. When we did recuperate their bodies, I was asked to keep them until we could send them back to the States. It was terrible.

Four times I had to do a total review of both of them, four times. For personnel from the government, for personnel from the Haitian judicial police, for the funeral directors who had to prepare them for shipment, and finally, to prepare them for shipment. This was deep in me, what happened.

And the day after, four days passed and we were able to ship them home. The day after, I was called by a business right near us and they said, there's a bandit in front of our gate who was shot. Can you come and take him to the hospital? What? You've got to be kidding.

You want me to come and take a bandit to the hospital? Do you know what happened? Now, he's not the one who did it, he has nothing to do with that, but he's a bandit and it doesn't matter. And I'm going to say it again, God doesn't really care that much about what I think. God cares about whether I'm going to do the right thing or not, and it's how it is with all of us.

God is not as concerned about what you think about it. God is concerned about whether you will do it by your will. Or you won't.

No one on my team wanted to go with me to pick him up and bring him to Doctors Without Borders. I said, then I'll go alone, and then by pure solidarity, they all jumped on the truck. Our biggest concern was going through the police to get to Doctors Without Borders, because they themselves can't have ambulances.

You're attacked by the police if you have a gunshot young male in your truck, because they're sure it's a bandit, and they're sure you're helping him, and you all pay for it. This guy was shot by higher-level bandits than himself. I learned the story from him.

They told him to go buy a six-pack. He said, I don't have enough money for a six-pack, I can buy three beers, and they shot him first through the right femur, and then they shot him through the left. And so he crumpled to the ground, impossible to walk, impossible to sit up, and all night long he clawed himself, clawed.

I know where he was shot, and I know where he picked him up. It was a quarter of a mile. All night long he clawed until he had rough fingers bleeding through the dirt to get to the place where he was, leaving a trail of blood, and there was a cold rain all night, which made it blood mud.

I picked him up. I put him in our truck. I headed towards Doctors Without Borders with him, and I said to him out of curiosity, where were you going? Everybody hates you.

I hate you. Where were you going? And he said, quoting a real Haitian proverb, my grandmother said to me, even in hell you might find a good turn, even in hell. And he said, even if I could just get to the street, I think I would find some good person who would help me.

And I said, what you would find is every car passing by on the street wanting to run over you. That's what you would find. And I said to him, how can you believe something so stupid? And he said to me, well, what are you? You're the proof that my grandmother knew what she was talking about.

And I was the proof. We were doing him a good turn. And on the way to the hospital, he was telling me how he hates being in that gang, how he never wanted to get into that gang, how they forced him into the gang, what would happen to his mother and his sister if he ever left that gang.

He hated being in the gang, and he said to me, I hate being in the gang as much as you hate helping me. And I said, imagine that. Our point of union, what you and I have in common is that neither of us want to be here, and yet here we are.

Who is your enemy? Are you sure when you define who your enemy is? Are you sure? Are you sure you know enough about the circumstances? Are you sure you know enough about the history? Are you sure, or will you be as surprised as I was that day? Here is my little brother. The only thing we have in common is we don't want to be here, but we can build on that. Abraham Lincoln once said, When I have an enemy, I have only one thought in my mind. I have to get to know them better. In any case, our Lord wants us morally committed. Our Lord wants us to engage with our love but with strength.

Our Lord wants us to engage without retaliation and without hatred. He wants us to engage with love under pressure. He wants us to engage in this world as salt and light, with the quiet strength that comes from the grace of God and only by the grace of God.

The gospel today says, if you have eyes, take a good look. If you have ears, listen carefully. This is the teaching.

Through the intercession of St. Anne, may the Lord help us to understand and give us the courage and strength to follow the proper way to oppose evil.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.