



4 November 2018

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year B

THE TWO LOVES THAT SAVE THE WORLD

On this first Sunday of November we are invited to reflect on and live out the two greatest commandments – love for God and love for our neighbor. As Jesus said, there is no greater commandment than these two, just as there is no other way by which people can live in harmony and lasting peace. Love for God is, indeed, the foundation of all because God is the beginning, center, and end of all that exists. But love for God should always be accompanied by love for our fellowmen, for no one can claim to love God who is invisible, if one does not love the neighbor he/she sees.

For us Christians, it is not enough that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus challenges all his disciples to climb a step higher, that is: to love our neighbor as Jesus has loved us. Such is the challenge addressed to us in a world choked by practical atheism, disfigured by man's inhumanity to man, and polluted by so many forms of adulterated love.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

**Forsake me not, O Lord,
my God; be not far from me!
Make haste and come to my
help, O Lord, my strong salva-
tion!**

Greeting

P – Grace and peace from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you all!

***All* – And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P – At the very start of our Eucharistic celebration, let us pause for a moment and realize how many times and in how many ways we have failed to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. *(Pause)*

P – Lord, you are the only living and loving God. Lord, have mercy!

***All* – Lord, have mercy!**

P – Lord, your priesthood does not pass away because you live for ever. Christ, have mercy!

***All* – Christ, have mercy!**

P – Lord, you joined for ever the love of God and neighbor as the greatest of all commandments. Lord, have mercy!

***All* – Lord, have mercy!**

P – May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

***All* – Amen!**

Gloria

***All* –** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P – Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

***All* – Amen!**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading *Dt 6:2-6*

Faith in one God and reverential love for Him were the two fundamental traits of the people of Israel. These set them apart from all their pagan neighbors. The profession of faith in one God and the duty to love Him with all one's heart, soul, and strength are among the most precious treasures we have inherited from the Jewish people.

R –A proclamation from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses spoke to the people, saying: “Fear the Lord, your God, and keep, throughout the days of your lives, all His statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you, and thus have long life. Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that you may grow and prosper the more, in keeping with the promise of the Lord, the God of your fathers, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.”

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 18*

R –*I love you, Lord, my strength!*

R. M. Velez



* **I love you, O Lord, my strength, O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.** **R.**

* **My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold! Praised be the Lord, I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies.** **R.**

* **The Lord lives! And**

blessed be my Rock! Extolled be God my savior. You who gave great victories to your king and showed kindness to your anointed. **R.**

2nd Reading *Heb 7:23-28*

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that the priests of the Old Covenant were themselves sinners and had to offer sacrifice many times. Jesus, instead, is the sinless, eternal High Priest who offered himself in sacrifice once and for all. He now lives for ever and is the source of universal salvation through his one, all-sufficient sacrifice.

R –A proclamation from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters: The levitical priests were many because they were prevented by death from remaining in office; but Jesus, because he remains forever, has a priesthood that does not pass away. Therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them.

It was fitting that we should have such a high priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens. He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people. He did that once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints men subject to weakness to be high priests, but the word of the oath, which was taken after the law, appoints a son, who has been made perfect forever.

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

All—Alleluia! Alleluia!

Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord; and my Father will love him and we will come to him.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel *Mk 12:28-34*

Today Jesus reminds the scribes (and us) that a sincere

love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor. The whole moral life of the Kingdom rests on these foundation stones.

P –The Lord be with you!
All—And with your spirit!

P –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Mark

All—Glory to you, O Lord!

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him: “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied: “The first is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

The scribe said to him, “Well said, teacher! You are right in saying, ‘He is One and there is no other than He.’ And ‘to love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself’ is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

The Gospel of the Lord!
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from

heaven, (*bow*)* **and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.***

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P –Led by God’s Word which enjoins us to love God and neighbor to the best of our ability, let us ask for the grace to put into practice these twin commandments. Let our response be:

All—God of love, hear our prayer!

C –For the Catholic Church and all other Christian denominations: May they be shining examples of perfect love of God and people. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For the Holy Father, our Bishop, parents, teachers, and catechists: May they practise in their daily lives the love of God and neighbor that they teach to those entrusted to their care. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For those who are tempted to reduce their religious faith to acts of piety and sentimental devotion: May they also practice the commandment to love their neighbor as the Lord Jesus has done. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all our public ser-

vants and professionals: May they give the very best of their energies in the fulfillment of their duty through the strengthening power of God’s grace. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For our community: May we commit ourselves to the building of a society based on love of God and neighbor like the first Christian communities. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all of us: May we treat everyone with love, kindness, and respect. Let us pray! **R.**

C –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

P –Lord God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, continue to mold our lives according to Your love commandments until we come to enjoy their fruits in the Kingdom of Love where You live and love for ever and ever.

All—Amen!



Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren. . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P –May these sacrificial offerings, O Lord, become for you a pure oblation, and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

Preface VII

P –The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P –Lift up your hearts!

All—We lift them up to the Lord!

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All—It is right and just!

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you so loved the world that in your mercy you sent us the Redeemer, to live like us in all things but sin, so that you might love in us what you loved in your Son, by whose obedience we have been restored to those gifts of yours that, by sinning, we had lost in disobedience.

And so, Lord, with all the Angels and Saints, we, too, give you thanks, as in exultation we acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!



All—Our Father. . .

P –Deliver us, Lord. . .

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us! (2x)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace!

Communion

P –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, O Lord.

Prayer after Communion

P —May the working of your power, O Lord, increase in us, we pray, so that, renewed by these heavenly Sacraments, we may be prepared by your

gift for receiving what they promise.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!



P —The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit!

P —Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing.
(Pause)

May almighty God empower you to love Him and your neighbor the way all saints did.

All—Amen!

P —May He strengthen your faith with proofs of His love, so that you will persevere in good works.

All—Amen!

P —May He direct your steps to Himself, and show you how to walk in charity and peace.

All—Amen!

P —May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All—Amen!

P —Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!

All—Thanks be to God!

“The Two-Rail Track that Leads to Eternal Life”

• Fr. Sal Putzu, SDB

The scribe had come up with a vital question, but imperfect in its formulation: “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus’ answer contained an indirect rectification of the question itself. We cannot speak of just one most important commandment. They are two. There is no “monorail” to heaven . . . The road leading to eternal life is indeed one: LOVE. But this “love-track” consists of two rails: LOVE OF GOD and LOVE OF NEIGHBOR, inseparably joined together by God’s very will.

Such is the teaching of Jesus, contained in that splendid synthesis that brings together the two fundamental precepts found in two different books of the Bible (see *Dt 6:4f and Lv 18:19*), but already underlying the whole of the Old Testament revelation. (See *Mt 22:40*.)

No one should attempt to separate these two precepts which God Himself has conceived as complementary. When unnatural dichotomies creep in, dangerous imbalances and even moral perversion follow inevitably.

A misguided religiosity which focuses on God, while forgetting the practical demands of love of neighbor, is not according to the divine will. As St. John piercingly puts it, **“If anyone says ‘My love is fixed on God,’ yet hates his brother/sister, he is a liar”** (*1 Jn 4:20*). And there are so many ways of failing or refusing to love one’s neighbor, while claiming to love God . . . St. James puts it positively as he gives a practical example: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God . . . is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction” (*Jas 2:27*).

In the same way, a misdirected love for people which makes them the supreme value in life, but positively refuses to relate it to God as its source, is a form of idolatry. It is a perversion. Such a creature-centered love soon will become possessive, discriminatory, oppressive . . . It will be no love at all, for “love is of God . . .” (*1 Jn 4:7*) At best, a “God-less love of neighbor” will be limited to this earthly life, but we, as the Christian faith teaches us, are made to live for ever. **Genuine love of neighbor must also include and show concern for their eternal salvation.**

In fact, **when these two loves are kept united as Christ teaches us in words and deeds, then wonders happen.** The life of a person flourishes like a tree planted by the riverside. The barren desert of human society, tormented by selfishness and hatred, blossoms into a splendid garden, rich with countless flowers and fruits bearing the trademark of LOVE, with its related virtues, such as: mercy, compassion, solidarity, forgiveness, generosity . . .

Such a unified love is the most powerful energy which we need in life. It can change and uplift the face of the earth. It can gather the scattered children of the “dispersion” caused by hatred, vengefulness, callousness . . . into a wonderful family, characterized by brotherly/sisterly sharing, solidarity and care. **Love is what brings us to work together under God, journeying together toward Him in harmony and peace.** That will be *the sign* that His Kingdom is already in our midst.



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