

30th Sunday of Year A- October 25th, 2020

The Greatest Commandment: Love of God, Love of Oneself, And Love of Neighbor

The Eucharist, the Sacrament of Love, invites us always to appreciate the love God has for us. It challenges us to experience this love and to show it in our relationship with God and one another. Strikingly, the readings of today among other things, invite us to reflect on the three dimensions of this love- the love of God, the love of oneself, and the love of neighbor- the greatest commandment. The love we have for God guides and directs other two dimensions of love.

Jesus in the gospel invites us to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul. It is a total love without reservation. The question can be, why do we have to love God? We have to love him because he loves us first. Out of his love He created us in His image and likeness, redeemed us in His love, and will save us in His love. We show that we love Him by the efforts we make to do His will and not our own will that opposes his will- "If you love me keep, keep my commandment" (Jn. 14: 15).

The basis of his commandment is the love we have for our neighbor which, is grounded in the love we have for ourselves. It then presupposes that before we can love our neighbor as we are invited, we have to truly love ourselves according to God's love. The love of oneself is not limited to only taking care of our physical needs- food, clothing, leisure or other comforts, but also taking care of our spiritual needs. It is when we have a balanced love of oneself according to God's will that we can use it as a yardstick to measure the love we have for our neighbor.

The third dimension of the love is the love for our neighbor. Who is my neighbor? A question like this was asked to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke Chapter 10, which led to the Parable of the Good Samaritan. That parable helps us to define who our neighbor is. Our neighbor goes beyond someone who lives in the same area or vicinity with us, but anyone who anytime or anywhere who needs our help, is our neighbor. This is what God invites the Israelites to take note in our first reading today. Our neighbor can be a widow, an orphan, a beggar, a handicap, a stranger, or even somebody we live in the same house can be our neighbor who needs our love, our attention, and our compassion. The help others need from us is not only material help but extends other aspects of people's needs. As Paul was pleased with Thessalonians for their work of faith, let us always live in this true love of oneself and neighbor through which we can please God. Let us ask the good Lord to help us experience his love and to show this love to one another. Amen.

"Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40)