

The Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 4, 2018

Reading 1: Deuteronomy 6: 2-6

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."

Reading 2: Hebrews 7: 23-28

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.

Responsorial: Psalm 18

I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, O LORD, my strength,
O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

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.

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.



Gospel: Mark 12: 28B-34

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.

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At the Name of Jesus

At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow
every tongue confess him Lord
King of glory now, King of glory now
It is the Father's pleasure, we should call him Lord
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word, was the mighty Word

O God, we adore you, O God, we bow down
We exalt and we praise you, led by your Spirit
O Holy One, O Holy One

With your hearts enthrone Him, there let him subdue
all this is not holy
all that is not true, all that is not true.
Christians, this Lord Jesus, dwells with us again
in his Father's wisdom
o'er the earth to reign, o'er the earth to reign.

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Psalm 18

I love you, Lord, my strength.

Turn To Me

Turn to me, O turn and be saved
says the Lord, for I am God
There is no other, none beside me
I call your name

I am God who comforts you
who are you to be afraid
of flesh that fades is made like the grass of the field
soon to wither

Listen to me my people
give ear to me my nation
a law will go forth from me
and my justice for a light to the people

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“Ground Rules” for Small Group Faith Sharing

- Maintain confidentiality – “Whatever happens in small group stays in small group.”
- Judgment-free zone – You don’t have to agree with every one, but you have to have respect for everyone.
- No “shut downs” or “put downs” – See Christ in one another, BE Christ to one another.
- Don’t be a “discussion hog” – Be sure that everyone that wants to gets a chance to share.
- Leave room for the Spirit – Silence is OK! Not everyone has to share.
- Practice active listening – Avoid interrupting, fidgeting, criticizing, lecturing, or thinking of what you’re going to say while another person is speaking.
- Questions are a guide - You do not have to answer all of them or go in order.
- Be open – God is doing amazing things!

Petitions

Our response: “The Lord our God is Lord alone!”

Closing Prayer: Lord our God, you are the one God and there is no other. Give us grace to hear and heed the great commandment of your kingdom, that we may love you with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

1. What word or phrase from the Gospel resonated with you?
2. Consider the word “fear” in the First Reading. What does fear mean to us today? How do you think it differs from a fear of the Lord?
3. What helpful insights about the love of God does the Responsorial Psalm offer us?
4. What words in the First Reading and Gospel reveal the bonds of affection between God and humanity, rather than fearful obedience from the people?
5. Consider Jesus’ offering of himself “once for all” that is described in the Second Reading. What significance does this have for us? What does this have to do with the Eucharist we celebrate?
6. Have you ever been faced with a situation in which love demanded more than you were ready to give?
7. What are the real-life implications of loving God with your whole “heart”? With your whole “soul”? With your whole “mind”? With your whole “strength”? Which of these do you find the most challenging?
8. What is the most difficult personal need or want to put aside in order to “love your neighbor as yourself”?
9. In the Gospel we are called to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and neighbor as ourselves. Is this an easy thing? Read Pope Francis’ words below. From where does he say the help comes for this endeavor?

Words from our Holy Father

What Jesus proposes in this Gospel passage is a wonderful ideal, which corresponds to our heart’s most authentic desire. Indeed, we were created to love and to be loved. God, who is Love, created us to make us participants in his life, to be loved by him and to love him, and with him to love all other people. This is God’s “dream” for humankind. And to accomplish it we need his grace; we need to receive within us the capacity to love which comes from God himself. Jesus offers himself to us in the Eucharist for this very reason. In it we receive Jesus in the utmost expression of his love, when he offered himself to the Father for our salvation.

- Pope Francis, Angelus, 10/29/17