

Monday Week 12 of Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

The Roman Catechism (published in 1555 in the wake of the Reformation in Europe) said in its preface, “The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope, or for action, the love of Our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love” (cited in the Catechism of the Catholic Church para 25).

“Love” in the quote here is personified; John in his first letter says that “God is love” (I Jn. 4:8). We can only love God because He is love and is the source of all love. Like rain is wet and wets anything that comes into contact with it, so coming into contact with God means coming into contact with love. To keep dry in the rain, we can put up an umbrella, or wear a waterproof coat. The question is, do we try to “keep dry” from the demands that God makes of us?

Jesus says that the most important command is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Only then can we love our neighbour. Let’s look at these three aspects of loving God. First, our heart. We associate the heart with love, and around St. Valentine’s Day, shops are full of cards displaying hearts as a symbol of romantic love. However loving God with all my heart is not romantic love – it’s an urge of my whole being through the grace of the Holy Spirit, to want to be close to God, to and to be still in His presence.

Secondly, soul. My soul is who I am. It’s my God-given personality that grows and matures – my body changes over time, but my soul continues to be “me”. Jesus tells us that we need to love God, not just with a heart-felt passion, but with who we are. So, if we are creative, we love God being creative. If we are generous, we love God by being generous. If we are studious, we love God in a studious way, and so on.

Thirdly, our minds. God is reasonable. He wants me to think and to love Him because it makes sense. He has created the world with order and pattern (science would be impossible if the world was random). Loving God makes sense.

God, who is love, loves each one of us so completely, unchangingly, and constantly. My response to God’s love must be to love Him and to show that love in the way I treat those around me. As St. John says, “Let us love one another, for love is of God anyone who does not love, does not know God, ” (I Jn. 4:7-8).