

30TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Ex. 22:20-26 1 Thes. 1:5-10 Matt. 22:34-40

HOMILY

“Master, which is the greatest commandment of the law?”

According to Our Lord, the greatest and first commandment is ‘Our love for God and Our Love for neighbour!’ This view of Jesus is a challenge to the values of the society we live in:

Our society will make us believe that human life is best fulfilled by success, for this is its greatest. It will view moral living in terms of political correctness. It will make us believe that wealth and health; beauty or fame are things to aspire for. Jesus is saying issues of success, wealth and health cannot dictate the value of life. Neither is beauty or fame that will give weight to life but love.

As St. Paul says, *“without love, everything else in life becomes merely booming gongs or clanging cymbals, profiting us nothing”* (1 Cor 13:1).

Today it is put before us that the love of God and the love of our neighbour are inseparable. As St. John puts it: *“If anyone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar”* (1 Jn 4:20).

How many Saints have expressed their love for God by seeking out the most wretched, the poorest, the most humiliated and the weakest members of society, and raising them up, to reveal their intrinsic dignity as persons worthy of love!

Jesus, for sure, does not separate the love of God from love of humanity! Love is the greatest value of life. Pope Francis in his recent encyclical *“Fratelli Tutti”* talks of love as that which *‘draws people out of themselves and towards others.’* (no. 44)

LOVE IS NOT FEELING OF AFFECTION

Love has nothing to do with our personal warm feelings about others.

It follows then that to love a person, including our enemies, doesn’t mean developing feelings affection for them.

Rather to love is a commitment on our part to take their needs onboard.

Even in marriage the feelings of affection are no grounds for a lasting bond.

EXAMPLE

The most exciting and most expensive wedding I have ever presided over in this country lasted three months. I couldn’t believe when this young recently married lady called me this other day to tell me that they had split. When I asked what happened, she told me that he said he no longer had feelings for her! Marriage cannot be grounded on feelings of affection: When the warm feelings fade so does their marriage.

Real love is a commitment and you see this in numerous situations where one partner has become physically incapacitated, difficult to live with, very demanding, and yet the other partner keeps on caring and putting up with it all.

To love, above all, is a choice of commitment towards the other person, to take care of their needs; it is to give away something of ourselves to the other person without thinking of what we will get in return.

That’s why we don’t love in order to get to heaven; we love because heaven is already ours in Christ. We don’t love in order to win God’s favour; we love because we already have God’s favour in Christ. We don’t love so that God will love us; we love because God has already loved us in Christ with the greatest love we will ever know, the crucified love of Jesus.