

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.
~~~~~  
**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Mark 12:28b—34** — Pg. 1  
**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3  
**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Mark 12:28b-34 – Roman Missal

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.

**Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings** From a sermon given during the last synod he attended, by Saint Charles, bishop  
I admit that we are all weak, but if we want help, the Lord God has given us the means to find it easily. One priest may wish to lead a good, holy life, as he knows he should. He may wish to be chaste and to reflect heavenly virtues in the way he lives. Yet he does not resolve to use suitable means, such as penance, prayer, the avoidance of evil discussions and harmful and dangerous friendships. Another priest complains that as soon as he comes into church to pray the office or to celebrate Mass, a thousand thoughts fill his mind and distract him from God. But what was he doing in the sacristy before he came out for the office or for Mass? How did he prepare? What means did he use to collect his thoughts and to remain recollected?

Would you like me to teach you how to grow from virtue to virtue and how, if you are already recollected at prayer, you can be even more attentive next time, and so give God more pleasing worship? Listen, and I will tell you. If a tiny spark of God's love already burns within you, do not expose it to the wind, for it may get blown out. Keep the stove tightly shut so that it will not lose its heat and grow cold. In other words, avoid distractions as well as you can. Stay quiet with God. Do not spend your time in useless chatter.

## Love and Charity – Lesson and Discussion

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of two foundational things: love of God and love of neighbor. However, what does the word "love" even mean? How is God love and how does He want us to love?

**SIGN UP free for  
Link to Liturgy**



**What is love?** Love means to “will good to someone. Also to please someone, either by sharing with that person what one possesses or by doing what someone wants. Basically there are two kinds of love. The love of concupiscence, or self-interested love, means that another is loved for one’s own sake as something useful or pleasant to the one who loves. The love of friendship means selfless love of another for that person’s own sake, for his or her good, to please him or her; it is the love of benevolence.”[1]

**What is charity?** Charity is the “infused supernatural virtue by which a person loves God above all things for his own sake, and loves others for God’s sake. It is a virtue based on divine faith or in belief in God’s revealed truth, and is not acquired by mere human effort. It can be conferred only by divine grace. Because it is infused along with sanctifying grace, it is frequently identified with the state of grace. Therefore, a person who has lost the supernatural virtue of charity has lost the state of grace, although he may still possess the virtues of hope and faith.”[2] Charity is the greatest of all the virtues.

**What is the link between love and charity?** Charity helps to properly order and raise our ability to love to greater heights. “The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony’; it is the form of the virtues; it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.”[3]

**Is Jesus speaking about love or charity when He speaks on love of God and neighbor?** He is primarily speaking of charity. While we can make an argument he is also speaking about love, He is mostly focusing on the Commandments which are supernatural and loving God and others for God’s sake which requires supernatural virtue. We must always remember, “God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled in the first of the ‘ten words.’ The commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God.”[4] God has loved us first because God is love.

**How is God love?** “God is love; all creation is the fruit of his love. Man, created out of love, lives by the divine love that maintains him in existence and showers him with its gifts. Since love is the source of our life, we cannot not love; for us love is a fundamental need, an indispensable duty that corresponds to our nature. We must love above all the Love which created us, the holy God; and since we have received everything from him, it is but logical that we love him not with an occasional sigh, but ‘with all our heart and with all our understanding and with all our strength’. Besides, since we are made in the image of God who loves all creatures, we must extend our love to all human beings.”[5]

**Why do I need to practice charity to God?** In John 13:34 Jesus makes charity the new commandment. “By loving his own ‘to the end,’ he makes manifest the Father’s love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves

receive. Whence Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.’ And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.’”[6] Furthermore, Jesus tells us “Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.”[7] Finally, as St. Paul puts it “If I...have not charity I am nothing...if I...have not charity, I gain nothing.”[8]

**Who is our neighbor? Why does Jesus say we must love our neighbor?** Our neighbor is not just the person who lives next to us, but everyone. Jesus tells us we must love our neighbor because when we love our neighbor we love Christ. “Indeed, by linking love of neighbor with love of God, Jesus freed it from every restriction; he taught that our neighbor is not only a relative, a friend or one who lives near by or a fellow citizen, but also our enemy, the foreigner, the stranger, the unknown – that is, anyone. He made this evident in word, but still more by example, giving his life for all men, and dying for them while they were still his enemies. ‘If God so loved us we ought also to love one another...If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us’. St. John’s conclusion deepens the already good one of the scribe and completes it. The Apostle has grasped the full range of the commandment of love and the vital connection between love for God and love for neighbor, even to the point of asserting that the first is perfect only when it is accompanied by the second. Whoever understands and lives the precept of charity in this manner is not only ‘not far from the kingdom of God’, as Jesus said to the scribe, but bears it within himself, because ‘he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him’.”[9]

“The apostle St. Paul reminds us of this: ‘He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”[10]

**How do we show love and charity to God and neighbor?** “We will show our love for the Lord by our faithful fulfillment of his commandments and by the way we carry out our duties in the middle of the world. Our love will be shown by our hatred of sin and of every occasion of sin, by our exercise of charity in little details like a genuflection well made, punctuality in our norms of piety, a loving glance at an image of Our Lady...It is precisely in the context of these little offerings that we keep alive the flame of our love for the Lord.”[11]

[1] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 325

[2] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, pg. 95

[3] CCC 1827 [4] CCC 2083

[5] Divine Intimacy pg. 177 [6] CCC 1823

[7] Jn 15:9-10; cf. Mt. 22:40; Rom. 13:8-10

[8] 1 Cor. 13:1-4 [9] Divine Intimacy pg. 177

[10] CCC2196 [11] Fernandez, In Conversation with God, 5,65.1