



## CSA HOMILY: OCTOBER 30 – 31, 2021



The major theme throughout the readings this Sunday concerns the greatest commandment. The Scriptures are full of God's commandments, but Jesus gets at the heart of them all in today's Gospel: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

It is unfortunately common for Christians and non-believers alike to view the law of God as an imposition that keeps us from doing what we want. It is not too difficult to guess why this may be the case; we all have memories of our parents or other authority figures telling us, "No," right when we were about to do something fun. It is understandable then, why we might presume that God's commandments, too, will keep us from what we want.

But God promises the opposite. He did not come to impose a burden; He came to remove our burdens: Matthew 11:28 - "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest." He did not come to take away our life, but to give life: John 10:10 - "I came that they might have life and have it to the full." Following the commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves is not something He wants from us; it's what He wants for us. Nothing less will satisfy our hearts.

Today, we can keep this commandment. Today, throughout the diocese, our Bishop is making an appeal to each one of us. He is asking for our prayerful and financial support of the Church's ministry, and He is giving us an excellent way to keep the greatest commandment: loving God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.

Throughout the pandemic, the Catholic Church in central Texas continued to serve the poor, share the faith, and offer the sacraments. Now, as our communities open up, the need is even greater. More of our neighbors benefit from the charitable and evangelical outreach, and through the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), we can meet their needs.

The CSA supports the education of seminarians who are in formation to be ordained priests. This past June, we received the gift of two new priests who are now offering the gift of the Eucharist to thousands. We also received the gift of six new seminarians, which makes a total of 30 men who have generously given the gift of their lives so that we might receive the gift of the sacraments. Through our gift today, they will continue to study for the priesthood and help others to love God above all things.

The CSA also supports charitable works for life and justice, youth and young adult ministries, as well as Catholic schools. Through our generous gifts today, we can love our neighbors as ourselves.

Through our gifts today, we will keep the greatest commandment, but Jesus will give us something even greater. He will give us the Kingdom. He told the scribe in the Gospel today that he is not far from the Kingdom of God. Knowing the greatest commandments brings us close to the Kingdom, but keeping them actually gives us the Kingdom.

The life and rest that our hearts long to know - that is the Kingdom, and that is what the Father delights to give us. Luke 12:32 - "Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom." He delights to give us His life to the full, the rest our hearts seek. It remains for us to receive it.

The Catholic Services Appeal is an opportunity for us to receive God's blessing, an invitation to keep the greatest commandment - not an imposition that keeps us from what we want, but an opportunity to settle for nothing less.

Friends, let's not be content merely with being close to the Kingdom. By giving to CSA, we will be keeping the greatest commandment, and we will receive much more than what we give.