

## October 25, 2020

### Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Today Jesus gives us a basic course on Christian life. Everything boils down to this: Love God and love neighbor. “The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” OK, got it! I am good to go.

It sounds easy until we run into real life. Until we run into people like what hear about in Book of Exodus, the widow, the orphan, the poor neighbor, the alien. We quickly discover that to put the love of God into action and demands change. For instance, we all grow tired of the simple task of wearing masks during this pandemic, but we do it out of our love of neighbor. To truly love the poor demands something of us, of our time, talent and treasure. God motivates us to act because, as we heard in the last verse of Exodus, if the poor one “cries out to me, I will hear him, for I am compassionate.”

Pope Francis frequently calls for us to be a Church for the voiceless and especially in his recent Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. He often sees a world where, and I quote, “persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, ‘not yet useful’ – like the unborn, or ‘no longer needed’ – like the elderly. We have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food, which is deplorable in the extreme.

A decline in the birthrate, which leads to the aging of the population, together with the relegation of the elderly to a sad and lonely existence, is a subtle way of stating that it is all about us, that our individual concerns are the only thing that matters. In this way, ‘what is thrown away are not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves.’” (# 18 and 19)

This official teaching of the Pope in his Encyclical does have a connection to his informal comments like the ones that we have seen in the media the last few days, quotes from the documentary, *Francesco* where he endorses legal protection for same-sex households. Do his comments suddenly change Church teaching? No, not even the Pope, by merely making a statement for a documentary, can change official teaching. Did he change the tone of the conversation regarding the pastoral care for same-sex couples? Yes, he did, just as did Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI when they said that the place to start with these kinds of issues is with what is good, beautiful and true, rather than with the “thou shall nots”. Pope

Francis is saying that the place to start the conversation is with the human person, the beauty and dignity of every human person and that everyone is a child of God, without exception. There are no “throw-away” people. No one is excluded, the love and mercy of God is for everyone.

Pope Francis’s starting point of the discussion is what we are for rather than for which we are against. He affirms the Church’s teaching for marriage is between one man and one woman that is open to the transmission of new human life. We are for a just society and the fair distribution of the world’s goods for all people. We are for the protection of human life from its natural beginning to its natural end, and we are for the right of life and happiness and family life for all people. He wants us to see our lives in our society, the family and the Church as protection for the dignity of every human person. To live the love of God and neighbor as Jesus taught is a simple message that demands the hard work and the constant conversion of our minds and hearts to make Jesus first in our lives.

At this time, I would like to invite John and Sandra d’Costa to come forward to give their testimony about faith and how they live out their faith in Jesus.

(After their testimony) Thank you John and Sandra.

The pandemic has touched our lives profoundly, as you heard from John and Sandra in their family experience. Jesus lives in us in ways that are so profound and deep that no evil can wipe away. We profess that our baptism gives us an indelible mark of Christ.

I know that you have to care for your families and these are not easy times economically right now. You are my family and I need to care for you. I do not know your economic situation, and out of love and care for our parish family, I need to ask you to join me prayerfully in completing a pledge card to the parish.