

2020 October 25

Thirtieth Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Exodus 22.21-27, "You shall not abuse any widow or orphan." (22)

The Psalm 18, "The Lord is my rock, my deliverer, and my fortress" (2a)

Second: 1 Thessalonians, 1.5c-10, "You received the word with joy." (6c)

The Gospel: Mathew 22.34-40, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (39)

Q & A sessions

Jesus had many Question and Answer sessions with the Jewish leaders. He started it in the Jerusalem Temple when he was just 12 years. They shot questions at him when he was on his mission of proclaiming the Kingdom, in the Temple and outside. Many great and vital teachings Jesus gave in response to their questioning. The most prominent among all of them, which is the very foundation of Christianity, is given today. That is the most important Commandment.

While insisting on his position that he came not to demolish any law or commandment, he condensed all commandments, laws, regulations, etc. (all that we call today, the laws and by-laws), into two aspects of one and the same commandment, namely, the Commandment of Love. Even the opponents of Jesus had to readily agree on this rendering of the law. Our introspection on our sinfulness, if any, could give clarity if we question us on one point, did I love, love enough, love as I love myself? If the answer is a positive one, we are safe at the judgment seat of Jesus.

We want to be good Christians, right?. In the dialogue of Jesus with the Pharisees, there is love of God and love of our neighbour. One does not happen without the other. We cannot say that we love God unless we love our neighbour. If we truly love our neighbour, we automatically love God. All the fundamentals of Christianity are included in this one principle of love. Forgiveness is one of those fundamentals. If we do not forgive unconditionally, we cannot claim that we truly love. Forgiveness precedes love.

Love and forgiveness involve total acceptance of the other as that one is, and not as that one should be according to our perception. That is, love is a total giving and total taking. Jesus did exactly that to us, he gave up himself totally for our sake and accepts us unconditionally as we are and where we are. To belong to Jesus and to the family of God, we need to be truly the brother/sister, servant, and disciple of this Jesus, and the children of this God, the Father of Jesus and of us. ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*** ***On these two commandments hang all the law and Prophets.***" (Matthew 22.37-40;

Mark 12.29-31; Luke 10.27)

Fr. George

