



LIVING THE GOSPEL

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
25th October, 2026

Theme: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Almighty ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees they got together ³⁵and, to put him to the test, one of them put a further question, ³⁶Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law? ³⁷Jesus said to him, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and the first commandment. ³⁹The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets too.'

Gospel Focus

As we near the end of Jesus' ministry and the end of the liturgical calendar, the reading becomes more eschatological, dealing with judgement and the end times, but also more apologetic, given in response to the actions of those who criticize him. In today's gospel reading, Jesus summarizes the whole of the Torah, borrowing passages from Deuteronomy and Leviticus. This is not unprompted, but a careful response to another test by the Pharisees. They send a scholar of the Law to Jesus, someone who knew the Scriptures well. His question is not looking for an answer in itself, but precisely for Jesus interpretation and something to fault him for-in particular, valuing some things over another. In Matthew 12, Jesus challenges the religious leaders on the interpretation of the Sabbath; this would just give them additional material to object to. In summarizing the Law with these two commandments, Jesus does not negate any of the 613 commandments given to Moses, but brings them to their fulfillment in love. To Love God is also to love our neighbor. If these are made our priority, guided by the church and the Scriptures, all else will follow.

Gospel Reflection

Teachers of homiletics-those who prepare seminarians and others to be good preachers-will often ask students preparing a homily if they can summarize their point in one sentence. If they

can't, they still have work to do to clarify what it is they want people to take away from their preaching.

In today's gospel, the Pharisees ask Jesus which commandment in the law is the greatest. This episode is the third in a string of four controversy stories in Matthew 22, in which religious leaders are trying to trap Jesus.

In Matthew's account, the Pharisees' question tests Jesus in two ways. First, all the commandments are important and all must be kept. If Jesus were to say that some could be disregarded, they would have caught him. More likely, the Pharisees were trying to see if Jesus could match other famous teachers of the time who could summarize the law.

Rabbi Hillel, for example, summed up the commandments thus: "What is hateful to you do not do it to your neighbor" In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made a similar statement: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets" (Matt 7:12). Now Jesus elaborates on that statement to bring into view the other side of the same coin: love of God.

The commandments to love God with one's whole heart, soul, and strength is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, the Shema repeated twice a day by the Jews. The whole self is involved: the heart, considered the seat of emotions, and the soul, the center of vitality and consciousness and strength or power. The command to love the neighbor is from the Holiness Code (Lev 19:18), which asserts that love of God is manifest in love towards one's neighbor. These are not really two separate commandments, then, but rather two faces of the same love.

What is not explicit in this text, but appears in many other places in Scripture, is that God's love is preeminent. Before one is able to demonstrate love of God and love of neighbor, God has taken the initiative in loving. When one has become open to God's free, unmerited, unbounded love, and has let the love sink deeply into one's being, that one then has the capacity to give love in return. When divine love overwhelms us, we are prone to ask with the psalmist, "How can I repay the Lord/ for all the great good done for me?" (Ps 116:12). The response is one simple word: love. It has two objects, which is inseparable: God and neighbor.

Today, with our rise with eco-justice consciousness, we would include all creation within our notion of "neighbor" to be loved. We would also include love of self, though this notion would have been foreign to people of the biblical world. They did not understand themselves in individualistic terms, but rather as enmeshed in a particular family, clan and religious group, and dependent on others for their sense of self-identity.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Exodus 22:20-27

²⁰You will not molest or oppress aliens, for you yourselves were once aliens in Egypt.

²¹You will not ill-treat widows or orphans; ²²if you ill-treat them in any way and they make an appeal to me for help, I shall certainly hear their appeal, ²³my anger will be roused and I shall put you to the sword; then your own wives will be widows and your own children orphans. ²⁴If you lend to any of my people, to anyone poor among you, you will not play the usurer with him: you will not demand interest from him.

²⁵If you take someone's cloak in pledge, you will return it to him at sunset. ²⁶It is all the covering he has; it is the cloak he wraps his body in; what else will he sleep in? If he appeals to me, I shall listen. At least with me he will find compassion. ²⁷You will not revile God, nor curse your people's leader.

Responsorial Psalm — Psalms 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

R: I love you, Lord, my strength. (R)

I love you, O Lord, my strength,

O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. (**R**)

My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!
Praised be the Lord, I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies. (**R**)

The Lord lives and blessed be my rock! Extolled be God my savior.
You who gave great victories to your king and showed kindness to your anointed. (**R**)

Second Reading — 1 Thessalonians 1: 5-10

⁵Because our gospel came to you not only in words, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with great effect. And you observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your sake. ⁶You took us and the Lord as your model, welcoming the word with the joy of the Holy Spirit in spite of great hardship. ⁷And so you became an example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia ⁸since it was from you that the word of the Lord rang out-and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other people about it; ⁹other people tell us how we started the work among you, how you broke with the worship of false gods when you were converted to God and became servants of the living and true God; ¹⁰and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom he raised from the dead, to come from heaven. It is he who saves us from Retribution which is coming.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1824. Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the *commandments* of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love." (Jn 15:9-10; cf. Mt 22:40; Rom 13:8-10)

2055. When someone asks him, "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?" (Mt 22:36) Jesus replies: "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 neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets." (Mt 22:37-40; cf. Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18) The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of 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. (Rom 13:9-10)

2083. Jesus summed up man's duties toward God in this saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Mt 22:37; cf. Lk 10:27: ". . . and with all your strength.") This immediately echoes the solemn call: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." (Deut 6:4)

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.

2196. In response to the question about the first of the commandments, Jesus says: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and 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."(Mk 12:29-31; cf. Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18; Mt 22:34-40; Lk 10:25-28)

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."(Rom 13:8-10)

Sharing and Discussion

1. Jesus teaches that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. When you picture God, do you naturally see Him as a loving Father who desires a relationship with you, or do you tend to view Him differently? In practical terms, what does 'having a relationship with God' look like in your daily life?"
2. Relationships require time and conversation to grow. How has your personal prayer life or time in Scripture shifted or grown recently? What specific practices—such as praying with Scripture (*Lectio Divina*), quiet contemplation, and the Rosary, or Adoration— help you feel most connected to Jesus?
3. Why do you think Jesus says the second commandment is "*like*" the first? How does your love for God directly fuel and sustain your love for our neighbor? Is a foundation of loving God necessary to truly love others?"

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Almighty God, you love us beyond compare and call us to love one another. Hear these our prayers that one day we might live eternally in your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Every Saturday

Time: 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

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George Chee – 97399216 (georgejc@gmail.com)

Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
- 3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church