

October 29, 2017

Wednesday, November 1st is a holy day of obligation, "All Saints". We have Masses at 8:30 in the morning and 7:00 in the evening. We have those two Masses for you.

A young teacher was about to get married, and she was all a twitter about it, talking about it all the time, how wonderful he was, and how wonderful things were going to be, and on and on and on. Finally, one of her co-workers, an older teacher, decided to set her straight. She came up to her and said, "you know, the first ten years of marriage are the hardest toughest years". The young teacher looked at her and said, "how long have you been married?" "Ten years."

In our gospel today, Jesus is being tested for the third time in a row, by the scribes, Pharisees and Herodians. This is all Matthew, same chapter 22. One more time, they try and trip him up. They say, "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment?" Now, you and I automatically think, commandment, there's ten of them. But for the Jews in Jesus's time, and still for orthodox Jews today, there are 613 commandments. And, you have to follow every one of them to be "righteous." To be saved. There are 248 Dos and 365 Do Nots, and you have to know all of them. So, they were saying, "Jesus, which of these is the greatest of the commandments?" Jesus once again, doesn't go with them. He goes back to the book of Deuteronomy in the old testament, and he quotes, "Love the Lord, your God, with all your mind, heart and soul." Then he goes to the book of Leviticus, "and your neighbor, as yourself." He joins the two together as no one has ever done before. It was unheard-of to do such a thing. But, He did. The reason He joined them, was to show us, they cannot be separated. In our culture in our country today, people think that they can hate their neighbor and love God.

"I love God, but I hate those Democrats."

"I love Got but those Republicans have got to go ... somewhere."

"I love God, but I hate that guy with the dog next door."

On and on and on, we are a divided society. We are so judgmental and geared for that, that its automatic anger if someone doesn't agree with us. There is no more normal discourse. We fly right into rage. People tell me, "I stopped the Arizona Republic because I can't stand the letters to the editor, those idiots don't know what they're talking about." We have all that and we know it's true. But God says, "if you feel that way about your neighbor then you cannot love Me." They're both the same. Just like if you love your neighbor and say, "I don't like God, I don't believe in God." You can't do that. They are one in the same. God loves all of us, equally. Each one of us. The ones we don't like, the ones we like, it doesn't matter, God loves all of us. God loves that guy that blew away all those people in Vegas. God loves all of us, He wants all of us to be in heaven with Him. Because He loves so much, we were created. We were not separated from the love of God. God is love. Because of that, we exist. We cannot separate love. Love is there. One woman with two kids asked a woman with eight kids, "how can you divide your love?" She said, "I don't, I multiply it." That's God. He multiplies it over and over and over again. To say that you can't stand someone, but I love God, is hypocritical. It's a lie. And yet, we do it all the time. Jesus says you can't do that. You can't do that. People tell me, "oh Father, my dog is like my son." And I'm thinking, you just insulted your son. I have people tell me also, when I'm dressed not in blacks, "I love animals more than people, I can't stand people." Well, then you can't love God. Because, you can't put anything above people, except God. One guy last night said, "Yah, but you may not be able

to do that because animals are more behaved than people sometimes.” Well yah, hopefully you took them into training. But, we can’t do that. Love our neighbor. God didn’t say, love your dog or your cat. He said, “love your neighbor as yourself.” There is a lot of self-love in the world today especially with social media. Everybody’s turned in on themselves. We’re losing the outward turn to someone else. God wants us to love across the board. It’s that agape love. I may not like you, but I want you in heaven because God loves you. So, I will pray that you get to heaven. Do you know that counselors, when they get certain people into their office, these people are all messed up because of their families. They will tell these people, “it’s okay not to like your brother or sister, it’s okay not to like your mom and dad, but you probably should love them.” And do you know, that most people that are told that, walk out there feeling better. “I don’t have to like that brother of mine, I don’t have to like that sister.” Most, tell them they have to. No. You don’t have to like members of your family. You love them, because they are members of your family and the family of God. We don’t have to like the guy with the dog next door. But, we have to love him in the sense of God. We cannot criticize and judge, because all of a sudden, we are not loving God anymore. That’s not allowed. God does not separate the two. Over and over again in scripture He tells us, “as you forgive, I will forgive you.” The Our Father, same thing. We have to do it first. We can’t say, “oh, I’m not going to go to hell because God’s a forgiving God.” Really? And did you forgive that person over there? “Nah, I can’t stand that son-of-a gun.” Well then, you better have a talk with God, real quick.

Jesus is making a point to the Pharisees. You love commandments, you love money, you love all these things and yet you put these people down that you are supposed to be leading in religion. He said that’s unacceptable. You can’t love God and do that to these people. We have to be aware that God does not separate love. God multiplies it. Just because we think someone is bad or we can’t stand them, God doesn’t do that. As it says in the psalms, “God has the rain fall on the just and the unjust, the bad and the good.” Because He loves them all. We cannot make those judgements, we cannot say things about other people. We need to pray for other people.

I wish Donald Trump was dead!” No, pray for him. “I wish Hillary Clinton would go downstairs!” No, pray for her. Especially with these people in Washington, right now. People are getting all bent out of shape fighting over this and that, pray for them. They are the ones who need the prayers the most. If you pray for someone, anger, hatred, all that stuff just washes away. When I was in the seminary, this Sister offered a course called, “Praying the Newspaper.” Well, if I did that, I probably wouldn’t get to church on time or I’d have to read it later in the day. But, it’s a good thing. That way you don’t come away angry or upset. The evening news, pray as you go through it. Pray for those people. We don’t want to, but, God wants us to. If we love God, we need to love everybody else. This is the whole thing about human relationships. We have to take care of each other, we have to be there for each other, we have to make sure that each are taken care of. This parish does a great job with the angel tree, with helping the needy that come to Christ the Victor, for all these things we come together. And yet, we still go out and criticize other people, we still get angry at other people, and we’re still harming ourselves. We can’t do that. God says, “If you love Me, you will love these people.” It follows, one after the other. And if you love people, you love God. Because, you are loving the very creatures He created. If we want to help ourselves do away with anger, and hate, and judgement, and change ourselves for the better as well, we pray for those who drive us the most crazy.

God Bless You