

Homily for Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 25, 2020

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For the past 3 Sundays we have been reading from the 22nd Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. In this Chapter, the Pharisees and the Sadducees are continually trying to trip up Jesus. The parables we hear about are the wedding feast, the question of whether we should give money to Caesar or to God, and today, which is the greatest commandment.

In each of these situations, Jesus not only answers the question, but He answers it in a way that not only makes a point...but also in a way that He knows He is leaving a significant teaching for all future generations. One that is as appropriate today, as it was 2000 years ago.

It is not an accident that He answered the question the way that He did.

We all know the division and differences that existed between the Pharisees and the Sadducees ...but Jesus also knows the divisions and differences that exist between everyday people in every time period.

We have to remember...Jesus was both human and divine...so He knows all.

In this particular situation the question was... “what is the greatest commandment?” He answered the question... “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” But then He added the second part... “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” You shall love your neighbor as yourself...

The first part of the answer was sufficient...we all know we are to love God...His addition to the answer Jesus showed His infinite knowledge and wisdom... “love your neighbor as yourself” ...not as you love me...you know you are to love me....I am God, I created the world, I am the essence of good...but as you love yourself... This is truly powerful and insightful...it cut to the heart of the matter.

There was division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in Jesus' time...but...in today's world there is real division between men...especially 2000 years later from when He first said this.

Think of today's world...the "I" mentality... all about "me"...."selfishness"... "individuality"... "love of self"...love of neighbor is not even on the chart. It was relevant back then...but what about now. Most would say it is truly relevant today.

So what is Jesus really telling me...What He is saying is that...I am to love you...and you...and you...and even the man who cut in front of me after I patiently and calmly waited 20 minutes in this line of traffic to merging...He is saying to love the person who is spewing venom... and the person who is spouting untruths about religion, politics...but how can I love him...we have nothing in common...that is not fair God, I love you...but him...give me a break.

Jesus also says... "we are the Body of Christ" ... "all of us" ...even the ones who do evil in our opinion. Even the guy who cuts me off in the line of traffic to merge...

So now that we know what He was leaving us with, what do we do...how do we do it?

If I truly love my neighbor, if we are both members of the Body of Christ, I am supposed to help you, guide you, share with you...especially if I am more blessed than you in certain things. This is being a good steward.

This is commitment weekend...Stewardship time...the uncomfortable word...stewardship...money...

The root of the word stewardship...is actually of Greek origin and comes from the word "oikonomos" which means ...to manage...to oversee...to be "responsible for overseeing things... like a household.

God is asking us to be stewards of His household...for His Body of Christ. To manage the affairs of His people...to love His people...to guide His people ...to share the gifts He has bestowed on us with others...to love our neighbor as ourselves...as we love ourselves.

Stewardship is about sharing, think of it as re-gifting the gifts God has given us...with others. It is much more than money. It is easier to hand someone a check than to give someone our time, to share our talents, to share our expertise. Remember, all of our gifts are from God. They are not ours...they are gifts to us from God.

We think time is precious and it is...sharing our talents, our skills, giving of our self...this is what Jesus is talking about. When we give of ourselves unselfishly...for the good of others...we are loving others as we love ourself. We are showing Jesus our love for Him...by loving those He loves.

Jesus gave Himself totally for us...totally...not just a little, not just some...and not just for a select few but for all, for all who will accept Him. He paid the ultimate price...His life...for us...so we could have eternity with Him.

One thing we all must remember...we all have something to give. All of us...all of us...can contribute in some way...at different levels... but we all can do something. This is why we emphasize participation here....and as Fr. David said last week...last year many...many of you responded by participating. Thank you for participating and sharing.

Do not think that you do not have anything to share...we all do. We all have gifts from God...Some have more financial resources, others may share their voices in our choirs, some serve as Altar Servers, some Ushers, some teach RCIA, CCD, some Altar Guild Members...we all have talents...we just need to reflect on our gifts and how we share them. Even our youth have talents to share.

Do not think that your small gift does not count... it most certainly does...Remember...1 rock is not a pile...but a pile is made up of many 1 rocks...together we can move mountains...individually we can barely move 1 rock.

This is where Jesus sees all of us...united together as the Body of Christ, moving mountains together. One Head...many members.

Today we are asked to show God...not just how much we love Him...but how much we love our neighbor. Remember the rock...together we are a pile, together we will move mountains.

We ask that those of you who were not able to commit last week...or if you did not commit last week and now are thinking I do want to share my gifts...to do so... You may say to yourself.... I will just put something in every week...We would tell you...we need to know what gift you are sharing, so we can plan how we are going to utilize our total resources to provide the ministries, services and liturgies that we all want to see.

Your parish family thanks you.

We would now ask the Ushers to come forward and for those of you who have not completed a pledge form to raise your hands and the Ushers will bring one to you.

We will take a moment for you to complete your form.