



## Bible Study \* Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

St. Maria Goretti and  
St. Peter Claver  
Parishes

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He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." Mat. 22:37-40 (NABRE)

### Reading I: Exodus 22:20-26

**IT IS ALL ABOUT LOVE!** When asked, "What does love look like? St. Augustine of Hippo replied; "*It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.*" In a sense, he gives us a vision of God, who is love. It is only when we decide to love others as God loves us that we reflect God's image and likeness. This is how we live a life that shines the light of God into a dark and depraved world. Our lives, as Christians, should be all about love.

God's love for the Israelites delivered them from slavery in Egypt. He made an agreement, or covenant, with them. He promised to deliver them to the Promised Land and ever protect them, provided they kept certain rules of conduct (Ex. 19:1-24). In keeping the rules of conduct, the Israelites would show their love for God. The verses in this Sunday's readings cover their duties toward strangers, orphans, widows and the poor. This is the law of



**What does love  
look like?**

fraternal charity, an obligation to love, imposed by God on His people.

The obligation to treat the stranger with respect is repeated frequently in the Old Testament. While the Israelites were not to tolerate the idolatrous customs of foreigners, they were to show love toward the foreigners themselves, as well as toward the poor and needy, generally (vv. 22-27). Note how vigorously God will defend the poor and helpless. God shows His unconditional love for the poor, because all they can give in return is their love and gratitude. Even in their business dealings, the Israelites were to remember the oppression they had endured in Egypt. They were to refrain from oppressing others. They were not only to refrain from doing evil, but were to do positive good. Their conduct was to be governed by love. Likewise, the life of a Christian is all about love. It is showing the world how much God loves us. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What is the usual motive for your actions toward others?

### WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is high esteem which God has for His human children and the high regard which they, in turn, should have for Him and other people. Because of the hundreds of references to love in the Bible, it is certainly the most remarkable book of love in the world. It records the greatest love story ever written—God's unconditional love for us that sent His Son to die on the cross (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). Love is not only one of God's attributes; it is also an essential part of His nature. "God is love," the Bible declares (1 John 4:8, 16) - the personification of perfect love. Such love surpasses our powers of understanding (Eph. 3:19). Love like this is everlasting (Jer. 31:3), free (Hos. 14:4), sacrificial (John 3:16), and enduring to the end (John 13:1). (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

### Reading II: 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

**IT IS ALL ABOUT LOVE!** St. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians was all about love. It was all about: 1. the love of God for St. Paul; 2. the love of St. Paul for the Gospel of Jesus Christ; 3. the love of the Thessalonians for God the Father and for His Son, Jesus Christ; and 4. for His disciple, St. Paul, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul was likely accompanied by Timothy, Silas and Luke when he preached the Gospel in Thessalonica. St. Paul reminded them that the example that he and his fellow ministers gave them was one of love (v.5). He praised them not only for accepting the faith in tough times, but also for the example of Christian love for which they had become known in most of Greece (vv. 6-7). This excellent example of love included giving generously to other Christians in need (2 Cor. 8:1-8). The love that he, Silas, Timothy, and Luke showed for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and for the Thessalonians became a model that the Thessalonians themselves reflected and spread to others. It was all about love. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** To whom do you spread God's love?

## Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

**IT IS ALL ABOUT LOVE!** The word Love is often over worked. It has too many meanings. "Love" sometimes stands for and justifies everything from: powerful desire, obsessive aches, murder, and deception. What verb does more work? What noun is more invoked? That's the problem. The word "love" means too much and too little. The word "love" means sex to some. It means thrills or emotional rushes. To others, love is used as a remedy. It is supposed to fix things and lead us to joy, ecstasy and bliss. There was a song that said: "Love is all you need."

In the Gospel, Jesus places love in its proper context. He tells us that "love" is all we need to serve God and care for others. This lesson comes after Jesus had publicly silenced the Sadducees with His answer to their question regarding the Resurrection (22:23-33). But the Pharisees continued their attack. The Pharisee in this case was an "expert in the law", that is, a teacher of the Old Testament who had knowledge of theology and law. His question was unfair for the following reasons: The Jewish Rabbis listed 613 commandments in the Law of Moses, 248 positive and 365 negative. It was impossible for anyone to keep them all, so they were divided into the categories of severe and light, or important and less important. The Pharisees instructed the Chosen People to give attention to all the laws, but particularly the "important or grave" ones. The unfair nature of the question was that it asked which one of the important laws is most important, or, which of the heaviest burdens is the heaviest (v. 37)?

Jesus answered the question by quoting **Deuteronomy 6:5**, or the *Shema*. He quoted a prayer that devout Jews recite every morning and night. This command to love God absolutely was to be "written on the heart" and drilled into the memory of every child. He uses the terms "heart and soul" that are designed to cover the entire body. The use of these terms signifies that we should love God without reservation and first, above all things (vv. 37-39). He also quoted **Leviticus 19:18** that requires love of neighbor. He places both commandments on equal footing. His message is this: The will of God and the purpose of our lives are to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves. It is all about love. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, mind and soul? Do you?

## Pray About It!

### Monday

Read Exodus 22:20-26. Give a donation to the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

### Tuesday

Read 1 Thessalonians 1: 5c-10. Offer yourself in service to someone in need.

### Wednesday

Put your cell phone away when you meet with others.

### Thursday

Read Matthew 22:34-40. Give to someone something that you would normally give yourself.

### Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist.

## The Catechism Teaches about Love of God and Love of Neighbor!

**"Teacher, what must I do...?"**

**2052** "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" To the young man who asked this question, Jesus answers first by invoking the necessity to recognize God as the "One there is who is good," as the supreme Good and the source of all good. Then Jesus tells him: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." And he cites for his questioner the precepts that concern love of neighbor: "You shall not kill; You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother." Finally, Jesus sums up these commandments positively: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

**Resources:** *The Gospel of Matthew* Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri. Baker Academics Grand Rapids, Mi, pp. 288-289; *1 Thessalonians*, Ivan Havener, O.S.B. ; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1151-1159; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2014*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.ND. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 234-237; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Philanthropic Trends Digest 7:13 [June 1, 1990] <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic->

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2017