**THEME**: LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR

**READINGS:** Deut. 30:10-14 / Col. 1:15-20 / Luke 10:25-37

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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INTRODUCTION

According to today’s readings, the commandments of God are neither remote nor mysterious. They are within our reach and understanding; and they are summed up in the command to love God and our neighbour.

THE COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT MYSTERIOUS

Some teachers of Mathematics make the subject so mysterious in their attempt to impress their students, they end up discouraging many of them from showing interest in it. God is not like that; He is like the good Maths teacher who knows the difficulty of students and takes His time to simplify issues for them. Thus, to communicate to us, God does not use a spiritual or divine language we can’t understand, rather he uses a simple human language – the Bible. Hence, in the first reading, Moses wrote that the command or Word of God is not too mysterious for us.

THEY ARE NOT REMOTE FROM US

God’s commandments, according to Moses, are not remote from us: they are not across the sea for us to worry about who would travel across to obtain them for us. Neither are they up in the sky for us to worry about who would go up there to obtain them for us.

Neither is God asking us to do the impossible thing of travelling to heaven to obtain His Word. On the contrary, He has sent us His Word– ‘Christ Jesus… the image of the invisible God’ (Col. 1:15; second reading) – who brings us the fullness of God’s message of salvation. What a loving God who always simplifies issues for us! Moses could therefore say that the Word of God is something very near to you, already in your months and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out.

THE TWIN COMMANDMENT

According to the gospel reading, this Word, which is near us and is in our hearts, is summed up as LOVE – love of God and love of neighbour.

LOVE OF GOD

Jesus says that we are to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength and our whole mind. To love him with:

* ***our whole heart*** – means with all our WILL
* ***our whole soul*** – means with our very LIFE
* ***our whole strength*** – means with all our WORK and WEALTH
* ***our whole mind*** – means with all our INTELLECT / THOUGHTS / REASONING

Thus to love the Lord with our whole heart, whole soul, whole strength and whole mind, simply means to love him with our whole BEING and not just a part of our BEING.

LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR

Who then is our neighbour? By the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches us that **a *neighbour is any needy person, regardless of his/her race, nationality, tribe, clan, religion*,** etc.; for in the parable, a Samaritan took care of a needy Jew, who would otherwise have been considered an enemy.

Secondly, in the parable, the ***Jewish*** priest and Levite were expected to help the dying ***Jew***. This means that our kinsmen and relatives are also our neighbours. Are we helping our needy nephew, nieces, aged parents, etc? Have we denied ourselves some luxury and some legitimate needs to, for instance, pay for the fees of some needy relatives?

CONCLUSION

Love of God and love of neighbour are like the two wings of a bird. As much as a bird cannot fly on only one wing so we cannot claim to love God while we hate our neighbour. ***Therefore, beloved, let us sustain our flight to heaven on the two wings of love of God and neighbour,*** amen!