**30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [26th October, 2014]**

READINGS: Exodus 22:20-26 / 1 Thess. 1:5-10 / Matthew 22:34-40

THEME: LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

We heard from last Sunday’s gospel reading that we should ‘GIVE TO CAESAR WHAT IS CAESAR’S AND TO GOD WHAT IS GOD’S’. In harmony with this admonition, the Lord Jesus Christ commands us to GIVE GOD THE LOVE THAT HE DESERVES AND, THEN, TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR as ourselves. The commandments to love God and to love one’s neighbour are like the two sides of a coin. As one can’t have a coin with only one side, so the two commandments belong together.

ONE SIDE OF THE COIN: LOVE OF GOD (Mt. 22:37)

Jesus said: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with your WHOLE heart…soul…mind’. This means that we are to love God with our whole being. We are not, for instance, to pretend we love God with our heart, while our mind doubts His existence.

‘WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART’ – The heart is the symbol of our will, feelings or desires. Therefore God should be our first and prominent desire. We should let Him capture our feelings and desires and let Him control our choices or decisions in life. We should be entirely devoted to Him in worship.

‘WITH YOUR WHOLE SOUL’ – The soul is the symbol of life (no one can be alive without the soul). So to love the Lord God with ALL OUR SOUL means we are to offer our whole life to God.

‘WITH YOUR WHOLE MIND’ – The mind means our intellect or thoughts or reasoning or knowledge. If there is only one thing or person we should think about, it must be God. Therefore let us seek to know Him more and more through His word, prayer and preaching of His ministers. Again, each day let the thoughts of God dominate our thinking.

NOW, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR (Mt. 22:39)

Jesus says: ‘the second commandment is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself’. Now, according to last Sunday’s gospel reading, when Jesus wanted to teach the people to pay taxes to Caesar, He asked whose image was on the coin. Similarly, the **‘coin of love’** which we give to God has His image on it. And who is the image and likeness of God? The human being, our neighbour. And so we are to give to our neighbour the love due him or her.

What then does it mean to love our neighbour? Jesus says: if he/she is hungry, feed him/her; if he/she is thirsty, give him/her water; if he/she is naked, clothed him/her; if he/she is sick, visit him/her; if he/she is imprisoned, visit him/her; if he/she is stranded, welcome and help him/her (Mt. 25:40-45). In short, be kind and compassionate to them as you wish should be done to you when in need (*cf*. 1 Cor. 13:5-7; Rom. 13:8-10).

Furthermore, Jesus says that all the Law and Prophets **hang** on these two commandments. Thus, He gives us the picture of a **STRONG BAR** on which all God’s commandment hang. Here I wish to bring other pictures to your attention:

* + LOVE is the FOUNDATION of God’s kingdom,
  + LOVE is the KEY to the gate of heaven,
  + LOVE is the PASSWORD to GOD’S WORD,
  + LOVE is the LIFE-WIRE of the CHRISTIAN,
  + LOVE is the SECRET of ETERNAL LIFE!

CONCLUSION

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says, don’t hang on any other bar for it will soon break. So let us rather hang on the LOVE-BAR!

Don’t look for any other key, for it can’t open the gate of heaven and there is no duplicate key to love. Therefore, let us look for the LOVE-KEY (the key in St. Peter’s hands), and our entrance to heaven will be assured! Amen!

Don’t look for any other PASSWORD to the WORD of GOD. Rather let us look for the LOVE-PASSWORD and the mystery of GOD’S WORD will be clear to us! Amen!

Don’t look for any CABLE-WIRE, for it can’t carry the Holy Spirit into your Christian life. Rather let us look for the LOVE-WIRE (wire of love) and we will experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our life! Amen!

Finally, let us not seek any Spiritual Secret other than the LOVE-SECRET, and ETERNAL LIFE will be ours! Amen!