



Scripture Nugget – Our First Duty

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” 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.” (Matthew 22:36-40).

Our first obligation above all is to return love to God with all our hearts, our minds and our souls (cf. Matthew 22:37-38). God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8) and out of love, He made us. His plan is to share His eternal life and glory with us, and to make us members of His family (cf. John 1:12). Out of love, God gives us His Commandments which are not burdensome (cf. 1John 5:3) but which are eternal, guiding lights on our path to our heavenly home where God has prepared a place for every one of us. Jesus shows us clearly how to love God. *Thus, Jesus says: If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments (John 14:15).* Through His life on earth, Jesus shows us how loving God and unquestioning obedience to His Commandments can defeat evil, win souls for God and give God glory. *Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8).* To love God above all else requires us to venture out of our comfort zone, conquer our self-centred passions and will, go against our own natural but sinful inclination, but we should remember that it is the supernatural power of God’s amazing grace that enables us to do this. It is not by our sheer human power. Whatever God wills us to do, He will provide the corresponding grace. The first step is to say “Yes!”

When we are able to love God above all, our love for others will become pure and unconditional. The secular world would like to promulgate a love for others without love of God. Love of others without first loving God is, but, a positive sentiment. It becomes tired out and conditional in the long run. Christ teaches us to see God in others and to love God in others. Thus, our love for others, irrespective of whether they deserve it or not, is for the sake of God. It will not run dry nor become conditional. It is not a mere sentiment; it is an enduring commitment to God, motivated by our love for and faith in God. *And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’ (Matthew 25:40).* It is God’s grace that empowers us to love, forgive and to withstand the temptation to repay evil with evil, and instead, to bless.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, please open my heart and impart to it all the graces needed to love You with all my heart, my mind and my soul. When I can do this, I will be able to love others truly and unconditionally. True love is my Origin, my Purpose, my Way and my Destination. You are the personification of the wondrous love of our Heavenly Father. Take my heart and give me Yours so that I can love You as You love me. Help me walk in Your footsteps and teach me to love so as to defeat evil, win souls for God’s Kingdom and give glory to our Heavenly Father as He deserves. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.