

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (*Luke 10:25-28*)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" He replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Our love for others can be true and enduring if it is for the sake of God

It is impossible to separate love from God, for God is the only source of true love. St John the Evangelist teaches us that God is love and those who love know God (cf. 1 John 4:7-8). God is love, and He created us in His holy image with a human heart to share His love. It is not that we loved God but God loved us first while we are still sinners, and He has given us His Holy Spirit who poured His love into our hearts (cf. Romans 5:5). Thus, we show love to others not because of our own goodness but because of the action of the Holy Spirit. *Satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days (Psalm 90:14).* Every time we sin, love flows out of our heart. We should ask the Lord to fill us afresh with His love every morning.

The first commandment of love requires us to give God all our love in our actions, in our thoughts, in our emotions, in our spirituality (cf. Luke 10:27). Thus, to walk on the true path, God demands our total love. In practical terms, it means all our decisions, big or small, in every aspect of our life need to have as its focal reference point, God. To separate God from any aspect of our life is to shut off that aspect from God's love and blessing, and not to live a complete and abundant life that a true child of God is called to have. Furthermore, implied in this commandment is that we should not have parallel loves alongside our love for God. This deprives God of the love that is due to Him only. For us to love others with a true and enduring love, there must not be any competing love for other creatures or things besides our love of God.

The first great commandment to love God gives power to the second great commandment to love others as oneself.

True, unadulterated love comes from God, and gives divine power to love others unconditionally not for their sake or for other reasons but only for the sake of God. The teaching of Jesus on this is very clear. *The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.'* (*Matthew 25:40*). This is a very powerful divine teaching not taught by anyone else but by Jesus Himself. Because of this promise of Jesus, His disciples in the history of Christianity have availed of the divine power to do great things for Jesus that no non-believer has been able to do. Because of this promise Jesus can teach: *If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them (Luke 6:29).* To a non-believer who has never experienced the power of the grace of God, such teaching can only be absurd and ludicrous!

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Our faith calls us to see God in everyone around us and to love everyone for sake of love of God. Through this calling, loving the unloveable, the undeserved, the ungrateful, the despicable and unrepentant is made possible through the power of God's grace which works mightily in those who strive to walk in the footsteps of the Divine Master. The badge identifying us as followers of Christ is "love". *By this everyone will know you are My disciples (John 13:35).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You came to earth to show me how to love. To love others without loving You first and for my own reasons would be like building a beautiful house without a foundation. When trials come, my love will tire and break just like a house built without a solid foundation. Lord, You alone are worthy of all my love and loyalty. You loved me first unconditionally whilst I am still a sinner. Through Your life on earth, You teach me how to love: by being obedient to Your Heavenly Father unto death on the Cross for the eternal good of all. Help me each day to walk in Your footsteps as a true disciple of Yours, as a true child of God. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.