

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

LOVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR ARE INSEPARABLE



My brothers and sisters, the scripture today invites us to reflect on one of the most important questions in our relationship with God and our neighbor, “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” In every civilization, laws have been created to protect the weak. What is unique here is the foundation of this Law: it concerns a people who experienced both slavery in Egypt and liberation by God. **The Lord revealed Himself as One who hears the cries of the downtrodden and restores their freedom and dignity.** Through the Law, God continues to stand up for those who have been humiliated.

We hear Jesus answer the Pharisees’ question: “Which is the greatest commandment?” They ask Him not to deepen their understanding of the Law, but to set a trap. They observed Him performing acts of mercy daily; **He was deeply close to those wounded by life—the sick, the lost, and the social outcasts.** He even performed healings on the Sabbath. He is criticized for doing “too much,” supposedly at the expense of God’s Law. In his response, Jesus recalls what is stated in the Book of Deuteronomy: **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind”** (verses 37–38). He could have stopped there, but he added something that the teacher of the law had not asked for: “The second commandment is like it... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus brings these two commandments together to reveal that they are inseparable and complementary. **One cannot love God without loving one’s neighbor, and one cannot love one’s neighbor without loving God.**

To live out this Gospel, we turn toward Christ. He lived out everything He asked of us, to the very end. On the evening of Holy Thursday, he said: “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” It is no longer a matter of a mere written law, but of a person who gives of himself. **Christ continues to breathe His Holy Spirit into His faithful, animating their thoughts, words, and actions.** He identifies himself with our neighbor and calls us to recognize Him in others. **Whatever we have done for the least of his own, we have done for Him.**

Through Holy Communion, it is Jesus who comes to dwell within us. He enters us so that we may love our Father and all our brothers and sisters on earth. We give Him thanks: **Blessed are you, O Lord, for this love. You send us forth to let it shine all around us. Keep us faithful to this mission.** May it be the guiding principle of our entire lives. Amen.

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