



Reflection on the Scriptures of the Day
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Thursday of the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

The Pharisees take pride in themselves because they know the law and their ritual requirements. They made it a life-time practice to study the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Old Testament along with the numerous rabbinic commentaries.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus is asked which of these six hundred thirteen precepts, is the greatest commandment. Jesus says that there are two great commandments of love. By quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5, He says that the first commandment is: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength," (v. 29). And by quoting Leviticus 19:18, He says that the second commandment is: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," (v. 31).

I would like to bring out here, the incident of Jesus's question to Peter three times "Peter do you love me?" Why did Jesus question him thrice? Because Jesus wanted to find out the real inner intention or the true of love from Peter. Jesus expected the wholehearted response from him.

That means God always asks for is love. When we love, we offer the best of ourselves. We grow and become better persons. He demands love not because He needs it but because it is what is best for us.

Jesus proclaims that we need to love God both directly and as living in our neighbor. Jesus emphasizes the principle that we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves because both of us bear God's image. Our neighbors, too, are the children of God our Father, redeemed by the Blood of Jesus.

Hence, we need to love God whole-heartedly by placing God's will ahead of our own and seek the Lord's will in all things and make it priority in our lives. God's will is that we should love everyone, seeing Him in our neighbor. This means we have to help, support, encourage, forgive, and pray for everyone without regard to color, race, gender, age wealth, social status, intelligence, education etc.,