

FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 29, 2023
“Commandments of Love”

Last Sunday we heard how a question was posed to Jesus in order to trick Him in His speech. They asked Him: “Is it lawful to pay a tax to the emperor or not?” Jesus answered that specific question with stealth, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar”. He not only answered their original question, but He advanced it beyond the original question. He said: “Give to God what belongs to God” (Mt 22:15-21).

Jesus will do something similar in this Sunday’s Gospel. Again, in an effort to trick Him He is asked by the Sadducees what the greatest commandment is (Mt 22:34-40) (CCC 2055). They likely think that He will choose from one of the original ten commandments, which are (CCC p. 496-497):

1. I am the Lord thy God thou shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.

Jesus who is the source of wisdom does not select any of these ten commandments specifically, but instead quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5: “You shall love the Lord your God, with your whole heart with your whole soul and with all your mind”.

He said: “This is the greatest commandment”. It’s the greatest commandment because it encompasses the first three commandments of the decalogue, which involve love of God above all else. It is why they are the first three commandments. If a person truly loves God, all ten commandments will be followed and obeyed automatically.

But as before, in answering their question He takes it a step further and said: “The second (commandment) is like it (the first), you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

This second commandment, the love of neighbor encompasses the remaining seven commandments, which are like the first three. For if we love our neighbor as ourselves, in doing so we are in essence loving the God who created them. We are acknowledging that God loves our neighbors as He loves us (CCC 1824).

In another place Jesus said: “I have not come to abolish the law (commandments) but to fulfill them”. He does this by giving us the true nature of the commandments which is love of God and love of neighbor (CCC 2053-2074).

Each of the ten commandments deals with some aspect of those two commandments of love. Thus, the ten commandments are all about love. The first three

commandments; love of God. The remaining seven commandments; love of one's neighbor. Jesus said: "My commandment is this, love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34-35). How many of us simply see the commandments as a bunch of do's and don'ts, and not as directives to love God and neighbor?

It is the Church that Jesus established, the Catholic Church which expresses and teaches the fullness of God's law and the Gospel (CCC 84-95). All of the Church's laws are an expression of God's laws, the ten commandments, and thus the Church's laws and teachings have love as their foundation. Much the same way that a parent loves their children by giving them guidelines to live by and help them to grow in holiness.

The authentic love of a parent is expressed by setting boundaries and guidelines for their children and in this way, they imitate God's love for His children, which we are.

Our love for God is the first of all the commandments. It is expressed in our love for each other.

John said, "He who claims to love God but doesn't keep His commandments is a liar" (Jn 14:15) (1 Jn 2:4-5).

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church