

The Two Greatest Commandments (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Exodus 22:21-26—Love of Neighbor

1. Strangers/Aliens: you shall not oppress/wrong a “stranger” or “alien” (NAB)
2. Widows & Orphans: you shall not “afflict” them; “I will hear their cry...”
3. The Poor: you shall not extort the poor by exacting “interest” from him;
4. The Garment: you shall restore it to your neighbor “by sundown”...
5. CCC 1868: “sins that cry out to heaven” = “cry of the foreigner, widow, and orphan”

Psalm 18—Love of God

1. “I love thee, O LORD, my strength” (v. 1)

1 Thess 1:5-10—The Reputation of the Thessalonians

1. Conversion: they “turned” from “idols” to serve “a living and true God” (1:9)

Matthew 22:34-40—The Greatest Commandment

1. The Context: a “Lawyer” asks Jesus a “Question” to “Test” him (22:35)
2. Question: “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (=Pentateuch)
 - a. “Law” = Hebrew *Torah* (i.e., the Pentateuch)
3. 1st and Greatest Commandment: “You shall *love the Lord your God...*”
 - a. with all your heart (=will)
 - b. with all your soul (=life)
 - c. with all your mind” (=intellect)
4. 2nd Commandment: “You shall *love your neighbor as yourself*”
5. Where does Jesus get these Two Commandments?
 - a. Deut 6:4-6: Love of God
 - b. Lev 19:18: Love of Neighbor
6. Summary of all Scripture: “on these two depend all *the law and the prophets*” (22:39)
 - a. Law = Torah
 - b. Prophets = Historical Books and Prophets
7. The Two Tablets of the Ten Commandments (see Exod 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21)

Tablet 1: Love of God

1. Idolatry
2. Blasphemy
3. Sabbath rest

Tablet 2: Love of Neighbor

4. Honor your father and mother
5. Murder
6. Adultery
7. Theft
8. False Witness
9. Coveting a Neighbor’s Wife
10. Coveting a Neighbor’ Property

St. Augustine on the Two Tablets

As *charity* comprises the two commandments to which the Lord related the whole Law and the prophets... [Matt 22:39] so the Ten Commandments were themselves given on two tablets. *Three were written on one tablet, and seven on the other.* (Augustine, *Sermon* 33.2.2)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. Did you know that Jesus got the two greatest commandments from the Jewish Scriptures (see Deut 6:4-6; Lev 19:10)? What are some practical ways we can “love God” with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves?

2. Why does the Church give us the commands about not oppressing aliens, widows, orphans and the poor as the Old Testament reading for today? How does this reading go with the Gospel teaching about the two greatest commandments? Reread CCC 1867 regarding the “sins that cry out to heaven”. How serious is the failure to love foreigners, widows, and orphans?

3. What do you think about the two tablets of the Ten Commandments corresponding to Jesus’ two greatest commandments? Which of these do you think our culture needs to work more on: love of God, or love of neighbor? Why?

For Further Study

- 1. CCC 2241: Welcoming the foreigner. A brief but helpful summary of the Church’s teaching regarding the rights and duties of immigrants to a country of adoption.
- 3. CCC 2052-2082: A concise but rich discussion of the Ten Commandments in Scripture and how the Decalogue functions in the living Tradition of the Church.