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Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Written by
THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Ex 22:20-26 | 1 Thes 1:5c-10 | Mt 22:34-40

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Sounds simple, right? Not so much. Jesus' words in today's Gospel can't help but take us back to that age-old question: "And just who is my neighbor?" According to the Lord's words in the reading from Exodus, our neighbors are the alien, the widow, and the orphan. Documents from the USCCB such as "Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity" and its writings on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person clearly reflect the position of the U.S. Bishops that it is essential for public policy to respect the dignity of all. While challenging at times, our faith doesn't offer guidance only for interior, spiritual realities. Indeed, our Church proclaims that we must let the demands of the Gospel shape the whole of our society. We are – to use St. John Paul II's phrase – to work to build a "culture of life," a "civilization of love." In the end, Catholic Social Teaching is nothing but the Church's effort to live Christ's call to love our neighbor as ourselves in the wider human community.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In response to the scholar of the law's question about which commandment is the greatest, Jesus responds by saying that it is to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Heart, soul, and mind are words that describe the innermost self. The Lord – it is clear – wants to be loved fully, by all that we have and are. He wants to be loved as the only Lord in our lives; there can be no other. St. Paul praises the Thessalonians for turning "to God from idols to serve the living and true God." In other words, they underwent a change of heart, where they turned away from loving things that were not God to loving and serving the only true God. This change of heart has enabled them to become witnesses to others of Christ's love. In our own lives, we must also undergo conversion if we wish to bear authentic witness to the Lord and to our faith. What are the idols we need to let go of to surrender our hearts, souls, and minds more fully to the Lord?

STUDY

As Catholics, we all have a responsibility to form our consciences and deepen our knowledge of the Church's teaching surrounding critical issues facing our world today. Spend some time this week familiarizing yourself with the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching, which are "a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amid the challenges of modern society." (USCCB)