Homily for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026 Year A

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they got together and, to disconcert Him, one of them put a question, "Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" Jesus said, ''You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these commandments hang the whole Law and the prophets also".

It is the first instinct of a parent to teach the child that it loves, rules for a successful way of life. "Follow these and not much harm will come to you".

In today's readings we hear God, our Father, giving the most basic rule of life to all of His creation who have to be concerned with not just the temporary life, but with an existence that will have no end. "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul".

Loving is the most sublime activity that human beings are capable of. We love all sorts of things in all sorts of different ways. But our problem is, how do we love a God who is pure Spirit, who we cannot see, smell or touch? How do you know whether the God whom you claim to be a loving God, is not just a figment of your own imagination?

Loving God does not consist of pious, sentimental, or emotional feelings towards Him; these can be experienced, but they are not the essence of love of God. St Augustine gives us a clue, "Love God, then do what you will". That is not a licence for promiscuity, but rather a statement that if your whole relationship with God is right, then it flows from that that none of your subsequent actions would contradict that love of God. Religious life, therefore, is a continual struggle to get the relationship with God right.

The danger in this struggle is manufacturing our own image of God that we are comfortable with, and which satisfies our needs. We may prefer a soft, sentimental, permissive God, or indeed a harsh, judgemental, and vengeful God.

If we look at the Old Testament, " .... the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom". God can't be whittled down to fit our needs and it doesn't follow that we should always be comfortable with our image of God.

We who follow Christ believe that God became Man and that, for us, Christ gives a window into the inner life of God. "To have seen me is to have seen the Father", and "Nobody comes to the Father except through me". We look, therefore, at Christ and His teachings to establish our idea of what God is like and to establish or correct our relationship to Him.

To love God with all your ‘Heart, soul, and mind ... ', is another way of saying we must direct the whole of our being towards Him who created that being, and who alone can satisfy the needs, the wants, the longings, and the dreams of that being. Ignore God, deem Him irrelevant, or look elsewhere in life and your existence becomes side-tracked.

So, loving God, for us, is not emotional or sentimental feelings, but first and foremost a struggle to root our lives to the will of the Father as revealed to us by Christ His Son.

And what sort of God does Christ reveal?

A God who is the creator and origin of all that exists and that we, His creatures, are only the minutest part of that creation.

A God who dares and risks endowing Man with reason and free will that man might use them to reject Him.

A God whose love for each and everyone of His creatures is so infinite that He humbled Himself to become Man; to suffer and to die that He might redeem those creatures.

A God who, however many times He is hurt, ignored, or sinned against, is willing to forgive and forget if that sorrow is genuine.

A God who is not mocked, but who is concerned about honesty, truth, and equity for all of His creatures.

A God who is just, and who knows the innermost working of the human heart and one day will reward each of us according to our deeds.

A God who needs and invites love, adoration, worship, and the eternal companionship of His creatures.

A God who explicitly demands action as a proof of our love. "If you love me you will keep my commandments". “Love your neighbour as yourself; love me in and through your neighbour”. How can you love the God you cannot see if you do not love the neighbour whom you can see?

As part of creation, like it or not, we are already in a relationship with God, a relationship which never ends, but it is God's will that we consciously, willingly, freely, and lovingly take part in. We deepen that relationship by growing more in our knowledge and love of God and all of His creation.

Each day of our lives are a God given opportunity to wake up to the mystery of who we are, that we may grow into the fullness of all that we might be.

That is what it means to struggle to love God with all our hearts, minds, and souls.