



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 4 November 2018

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

At the heart of this Sunday's Gospel passage (cf. Mk 12:28b-34), there is the commandment of love: *love of God and love of neighbour*. A scribe asks Jesus: "Which commandment is the first of all?" (v. 28). He responds by quoting the profession of faith with which every Israelite opens and closes his day, and begins with the words "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut 6:4). In this manner Israel safeguards its faith in the fundamental reality of its whole creed: only one Lord exists and that Lord is 'ours' in the sense that he is bound to us by an indissoluble pact; he loved us, loves us, and will love us for ever. It is from this source, this love of God, that the twofold commandment comes to us: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.... You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk 12:30-31).

In choosing these two Words addressed by God to his people and by putting them together, Jesus taught once and for all that love for God and love for neighbour are inseparable; moreover, they sustain one another. Even if set in a sequence, they are two sides of a single coin: experienced together they are a believer's strength! To love God is to live of him and for him, for what he is and for what he does. Our God is unmitigated *giving*; he is unlimited *forgiveness*; he is a *relationship* that promotes and fosters. Therefore, to love God means to invest our energies each day to be his assistants in the unmitigated service of our neighbour, in trying to forgive without limitations, and in cultivating relationships of communion and fraternity.

Mark the Evangelist does not bother to specify *who* the neighbour is, because a neighbour is a person whom I meet on the journey, in my days. It is not a matter of pre-selecting my neighbour: this is not Christian. I think my neighbour is the one I have chosen ahead of time: no, this is not Christian, it is pagan; but it is about having eyes to see and a heart to want what is good for him or her. If we practice seeing with Jesus' gaze, we will always be listening and be close to those in need. Of course our neighbour's needs require effective responses, but even beforehand they require sharing. With one look we can say that the hungry need not just a bowl of soup, but also a smile, to be listened to and also a prayer, perhaps said together. Today's Gospel passage invites us all to be projected not only toward the needs of our poorest brothers and sisters, but above all to be attentive to their need for fraternal closeness, for a meaning to life, and for tenderness. This challenges our Christian communities: it means avoiding the risk of being communities that have many initiatives but few relationships; the risk of being community 'service stations' but with little company, in the full and Christian sense of this term.

God, who is love, created us to love and so that we can love others while remaining united with him. It would be misleading to claim to love our neighbour without loving God; and it would also be deceptive to claim to love God without loving our neighbour. The two dimensions of love, for God and for neighbour, in their unity characterize the disciple of Christ. May the Virgin Mary help us to welcome and bear witness in everyday life to this luminous lesson.

After the Angelus the Pontiff added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my pain at the terrorist attack that hit the Coptic-Orthodox Church in Egypt two days ago. I pray for the victims, pilgrims killed for the sole fact of being Christians, and I ask Mary Most Holy to console the families and the entire community. Let us pray together to Our Lady: *Hail Mary....*

Yesterday, in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Mother Clelia Merloni was beatified. The Foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was a woman wholly abandoned to God's will, zealous in charity, patient in adversity, and heroic in forgiveness. Let us give thanks to God for the luminous evangelical witness of the new Blessed and let us follow her example of goodness and mercy. A round of applause for the new Blessed.

I greet all of you, Romans and pilgrims, in particular the students from Vienna, the young people of the 'Opera Giorgio La Pira' in Florence, the young families from Raldon, Verona, the faithful from Milan, Petosino, Civitanova Marche, from the Diocese of Ozieri, the Oratory of Carugate, the young confirmands from Longare and Modena. I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

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