

Homily. 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. A. 28/29 October 2023.

The only way that we can come to know that we are both loved and loveable is if someone loves us. This is yet another reason why depriving little children, and indeed anyone, of the security and acceptance of love is such a despicable, vile, even a violent act. I think of the children and families in Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and in so many other places right now who are experiencing not the warmth of love but the coldness of war, suffering and death. The impact of this love deprivation and rejection is sure to have lifelong consequences for them, and ultimately for all of us.

Our Christian belief and thinking is that we were all created good by the good and ever-loving God. Yes, we're also all frail and fallible, but at our core we remain God's most wonderful and very good creation. Nothing and no one should ever take this birthright from us. Such a gift, from the moment of our conception to our death, is the source of our drive to discover the meaning, purpose and right direction for our lives. Given the grace and gift of faith, we understand that our purpose is to be found in God's love for us and our responding love for God. This is the 1st commandment, a law written on our hearts, accepted by all faiths and religions, a law of love that is discoverable even by anyone of good will.

In summary, Love Itself has made us and sustains us. The Creator's love wants us to live fully and freely and the loving God of all accepts us just as we are, finding we human beings to be both liked and likeable. Each and every one of our Sacraments seeks to communicate this divine love and liking to us in a world that too often is a long way from doing so.

With this in our minds and hearts it's little wonder then that Jesus joined the 1st commandment to the 2nd, making the one great commandment, for how can we sincerely believe and say that we love God if we dislike, detest, mistreat and abuse each other? Such thinking is illogical, a sign of a schizoid, faulty and divided personality. In the terms of our faith, such behaviour is a consequence of sin and the cause of even more sinning. It is an offence against God and an arrogant, self-centred violence that offends the rightful dignity of our sisters and brothers.

As Jesus said, this one great commandment fulfils the whole teaching of the divine law and the words of the Prophets too. Upon it, being lived and practiced, everything depends; our right to life, respect, freedom, the salvation of our souls and the peace and progress of the world. You and I have a role to play in all of this, and not an unimportant one at that. Given the light we've received from our experience of God's love for us we are empowered by the Spirit of Christ to share God's love, acceptance and liking with others, especially with people in crisis and acute need.

In the Psalm we said; I love you, Lord my strength. God's strengthening love frees us to be compassionate towards others, even towards those who neither know us or care about us. Doing this is nothing more, nor is it any less, than living out the true meaning of the Eucharist we celebrate and share here. So then, with all that I've said in mind let's continue to thank God for loving and liking us so much as to sacrifice all to save us, asking for the help we always need to live out each day the great law of love that Jesus has given us.