



30th Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Jesus continues his refutation of the religious Authorities' presentations of the Jewish faith. He wants them to see that he is faithful to their traditions and is presenting the way (the way of love) which completes them. The Authorities are caught up in internal disputes. Rather than presenting a multifaceted presentation of their faith, they present their own aspect to the exclusion of the aspects of opposing groups. They resist believing that all things can come together in Jesus. They tried to present a united opposition to Jesus. But he showed them how their ways were unfaithful to their tradition with three parables. Two groups from the Authorities, which had opposite political views, tried to trap Jesus over taxes. Then another group, the Sadducees who believed in the resurrection of the dead, try to trap him with the dilemma of the woman who outlived seven husbands (Mt 22:23-32). His explanation outwits them again. But "*the people who heard him were astonished at his teaching*" (Mt 22:33). The People are still with Jesus; the Authorities are feeling vulnerable. So, in our text, the Authorities re-group and one of them (a teacher of the Law¹) tries to catch Jesus out. They had many laws; their lives were delineated by laws. If Jesus were to choose one law, would he not be excluding others? This was how things worked in their internal disputes! Would he choose one Law from the Ten Commandments as presented in Deuteronomy Ch. 5 or in Exodus 20:1-17? Or would he choose one law from the Book of Leviticus especially from Chs 18 & 19? They would have known Moses' admonitions after giving the Ten Commandments, Dt 6:4-9 – the prime importance of loving God². How could they ignore the words the Lord had spoken to Moses (Lv 19:18b) "*love your neighbour as yourself*"? You cannot choose one law to the exclusion of others! Jesus confounds them by choosing one law that includes all others. Maybe they might come to see that all things come together in him. Their resistance to belief in Jesus persists!

Read: **Matthew 22: 34 - 40**

Meditatio: How far do I go to get people to agree to my way? Can I cope with different opinions on the same matter? Do I think that other religions have nothing or something to offer me? Do I look to Jesus as **the way** to follow? Do all things come together for me in Jesus Christ? How important is my belief in the resurrection of the dead (this belief was central for the Sadducees)? What do I think eternal life will be like? Do I have lots of rules that I live by? Do I choose between the rules/laws that I follow? How important is the love of God for me? Do I love myself; God loves me first? Is my love of God seen in how I treat/love my neighbour? How am I coping with 'social distancing' and interacting with those around me? I am never alone, God is with me – do I take time with God e.g. through prayer and reflection? Does the **law of love** shape my whole life? Is God central to my heart, soul and mind? Do I exclude God from parts of my life? Is God present to me in my heart e.g. in my feelings, in what/whom I love etc.? Is God present in my soul e.g. in my very being, through my gift of life etc.? Is God present to me in my mind e.g. in my thoughts, in my studies, in my imaginings and planning etc.?

Oratio: Pray for a thoroughgoing love of God. Pray for true love of self – God first love us all. Pray for all religious faiths. Pray for theologians. Pray for unity in diversity. Pray that our love of God will be real as we help one another. Pray that civil laws will be in accord with the law of love. Pray for lawmakers and governments. Pray that political campaigns may not distort the truth. Pray for students, schools and colleges. Pray for trust in Jesus.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Make time for prayer and reflection.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 22: 34 - 40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and to disconcert him, one of them¹ 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.'³

This is the greatest and the first commandment.

The second resembles it: you must love your neighbour as yourself.⁴

On these two commandment hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

Notes:

¹ Matthew's text does not name the 'one' as a Teacher of the Law. But Mark's parallel account (Mk 12:28) does specify a Teacher of the Law.

² The Jews would know well the importance of the text Dt 6:4-9. It was one of the texts put on scrolls that were encased in small leather boxes that they secured to their foreheads i.e. Tefillin. This box was connected to straps, with another box, that were wound around the arm and entwined with the fingers. The Tefillin did not contain the text of the Ten Commandments. From the internet: "**Tefillin** or **phylacteries**, is a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah. Tefillin is worn by observant adult Jews during weekday morning prayers." (Wikipedia ref: 'Tefillin')

³ This is a quote of Dt 6:4-9.

⁴ This is a quote of Lv 19:18b.