



20. August 2021

“The Most Important Commandments”

Mt 22: 34-40

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

The Lord summarizes in two commandments all the Law and the prophets. These are the essential ones, because they embrace all that has been revealed to us as the Will of God.

On the one hand, they are very simple; on the other hand, they are also complex, and it will take us a lifetime, until we reach eternity, to learn to fulfill them to the fullness. The second commandment, which refers to love of neighbor, is just as important as the first; however, they are not identical, but complement each other.

To "love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" is the most important commandment, and in it man will discover the meaning of his existence, which does not consist in making himself and his own happiness the central object of his interests, but in responding to the One who created and redeemed us. To love Him with all our heart means that from the center of our person we turn to God, we seek Him, we live in His presence, we understand His love better and better and we fulfill His Will. It also means affirming God's existence and recognizing His loving dominion over all men, discovering Him everywhere and also announcing Him.

Only if we have our hearts totally focused on God and open to His loving presence, He will be able to fill us with the fullness of His love, and it will enter into us and fill us. In the observance of this commandment, man finds his true identity and his home, which consists in living in trusting communion with God. Here man's *raison d'être* is revealed, and he enters into the true order of existence! The forces of his soul are drawn to God, freed from their confusions and comforted in the love of the Lord. In this way, man's inner focus harmonizes with the Will of his Creator, who is our good Father, whose benevolence embraces the whole person.

But not only the heart, but also the mind of man is to be entirely directed toward God, discovering His wonderful working in all Creation, for everything proceeds from His hand.

If man centers his mind on God, it will be possible for him to discern when a thought separates him from Him and leads him to nothingness; and when a thought honors God and praises His presence. To apply it concretely, we could take the advice of St. Benedict, who recommended his monks to be always aware of the constant presence of God. If we move in this certainty of God's Presence, our whole existence will acquire a fundamental security.

If we come to know God and His love more closely, it will not be difficult for us to understand that He has given us the commandment to love our neighbor. The same love that God has for us, He has for all men, who are also called to live as His children. Thus, He entrusts our neighbor to us so that we may treat him as His child and our brother.

In fact, love, which becomes the basic question of our life, yearns to give of itself, to share, to have pity on the needs of others, to treat them with the same benevolence with which God treats us... A concretization of love for God is love of neighbor. Just as we discover our own dignity in the encounter with the Lord, we can also discover the true dignity of the other precisely in the fact that he or she is a creature and child of God.

Love of neighbor embraces all areas of man, which have been entrusted to our loving care. But the most important thing is that we help the person to come into contact with God's love, to emerge from his lethargy, awakened by the kiss of divine love.

This is the most urgent task that God has entrusted to man. If we have awakened to the true love of God, we will be able to bear witness, and this same love will impel us to proclaim God and to testify to him with our works of charity.