

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (10/25-26/2008)
Exodus 22/20-26, Psalm 18, 1 Thessalonians 1/5-10, Matthew 22/34-40

*“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind.*

This is the greatest and the first commandment. (Deuteronomy 6/5)

The second is like it.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19/18)

The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

What more can we say?

Long before Jesus came on the scene, his Hebrew ancestors had been appraised of God’s will in this matter.

When Jesus came along, he deepened the extent of the Law.

Originally, loving one’s neighbor meant loving one’s countrymen, one’s fellow Hebrews.

Jesus had no such restrictions.

To love one’s neighbor is to love everyone who comes along.

Even one’s enemies.

If there is any single statement that should identify us as Christians, it’s the above passage from Matthew’s Gospel.

It should be our daily mantra, our daily agenda, and the basis for our nightly examination of conscience.

“How did I do today?” we should ask ourselves each evening.

Did I love God, myself, my neighbor?

What did it look like?

If I failed, I must look into the reasons for that failure.

There are hundreds of millions of Christians - those who claim to be Christ’s disciples - in the world today.

What if we all did our bit?

What if we all of us, each day, loved as Jesus urges us to love?

The world would be a vastly different place.

Of course, there would be times when we fail to keep the commandment either through wrongdoing or through omissions and failures to reach out.

We are only human after all.

Because it is God who initiates this whole process of love, however, we can be assured of divine understanding and forgiveness.

Jesus’ death and resurrection guarantees – guarantees, we say! – that eventuality.

At the outset of this essay, I asked, “What more can we say?”

Then I went on to write more words.

It’s really not about words, it’s about actions: love God, self and neighbor!