



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 3 November 2024

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, good Sunday!

The Gospel of today's liturgy (*Mk 12:28-34*) tells us about one of the many discussions Jesus had at the temple of Jerusalem. One of the scribes approaches him and questions him: "Which commandment is the first of all?" (v. 28). Jesus responds by putting together two fundamental words of the Mosaic law: "You shall love the Lord your God" and "You shall love your neighbour" (vv. 30-31).

With his question, the scribe was looking for "the first" of the commandments, that is, a principle at the basis of all the commandments. The Jews had many precepts and sought the basis of all of them, one that was fundamental. They tried to agree on a fundamental one, and there were discussions among themselves, discussions that were good because they sought the truth. And this question is essential for us too, for our life and for the journey of our faith. Indeed, we too at times feel lost among so many things, and ask ourselves: but, in the end, what is the most important thing of all? Where can I find the centre of my life, of my faith? Jesus gives us the answer, by putting together two commandments that are the primary ones: "You shall love the Lord your God" and "You shall love your neighbour". And this is, in a way, the heart of our faith.

As we know, we all need to return to the heart of life and faith, because the heart is "the radical source of their strengths, convictions" (Encyclical *Dillexit Nos*, 9). And Jesus tells us that the source of everything is love, that we must never separate God from man. The Lord says to the

disciples of all ages: in your journey, what matters is not exterior practices, such as burnt offerings and sacrifices (v. 33), but the readiness of heart with which you open yourself to God and to brethren in love. Brothers and sisters, we can in fact do many things, but doing them only for ourselves and without love, is no good; doing things with a distracted heart or even with a closed heart, is no good. All things must be done with love.

The Lord will come, and he will ask us first and foremost about love: “How did you love?”. It is thus important to fix the most important commandment in our hearts. What is it? Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbour as yourself. And to carry out an examination of conscience every day, asking ourselves: is love for God and neighbour the centre of my life? Does my prayer to God spur me to reach out to my brothers and sisters and love them gratuitously? Do I recognize the presence of the Lord in the faces of others?

May the Virgin Mary, who bore the law of God imprinted in her immaculate heart, help us to love the Lord and our brothers and sisters.

After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and other countries! I greet the Carmelite Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit, who are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their secular Fraternity; I greet the faithful of Venice, Pontassieve, Barberino di Mugello, Empoli and Palermo, and of Santa Maria alle Fornaci in Rome; as well as the teenagers of Catanzaro with their parish educators.

I greet the blood donors from Coccaglio, Brescia, and the group from *Emergency* Rome South, committed to recalling Article 11 of the Italian Constitution, which states: “Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes”. Remember this article! Keep going!

And may this principle be implemented all over the world: may war be banned and issues be addressed through law and negotiations. Let weapons be silenced and space be made for dialogue. Let us pray for martyred Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, and South Sudan.

And let us continue to pray for Valencia and the other communities in Spain, who are suffering so much in these days. What do I do for the people of Valencia? Do I pray? Do I offer something? Think about this question.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch!
Arrivederci.
