

One Body Initiative: Week Six – Love God, Love Neighbor **October 19, 2020**

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40

(New American Bible Revised Edition)

(34) When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, (35) and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, (36) ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ (37) He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. (38) This is the greatest commandment. (39) The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.

Commentary:

From the *Little Rock Catholic Study Bible*

(34) The questioner, as the representative of other Pharisees, tests Jesus by his question.

(35) [A scholar of the law]: meaning a “scribe.” Although this reading is supported by the vast majority of textual witnesses, it is the only time that the Greek word so translated appears in Matthew.

(36) For the devout Jew all the commandment were to be kept with equal care, but there is evidence of preoccupation in Jewish sources with the question put to Jesus.

(37 – 38) Reference to Deuteronomy 6:5. The love of God must engage the total person.

(39) Jesus goes beyond the extent of the question put to him and joins to the greatest and the first commandment a second, that of love of neighbor. This combination of the two commandments may already have been made in Judaism.

Additional Resources

“The Church: A Communion of Life, Love, and Truth for the World’s Salvation.” Homily by Bishop Oscar Romero, preached on October 29, 1978.

<http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/homilies-and-writings/homilies/church-communion-life-love-and-truth-world%E2%80%99s-salvation>

“But what was unique about Christ was something else, and let us not forget it. Along with this great and grave commandment, «You shall love God», he placed at the same

level: «and your neighbor as yourself». This indeed is unique about Christianity, that you love your neighbor with the same motive with which you love God. This is the chief characteristic of the Gospel. That is why, when Christ was taking leave of his disciples, he spoke the new commandment: «Love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34), because not only have I loved my Father with all my heart, but for love of him I have also loved you even to the point of giving my life for you». This is what is unique and original in our faith, sisters and brothers. It is very easy; indeed, it's almost an evasion to say, «I go to church out of love for God, and my neighbor matters little to me». Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan: the priest and Levite were men of the church, but they failed in their duty because, in their hurry to get to the temple to pray, they left the poor wounded man on the road; they were not neighbors, declared Christ (Luke 10:29-37).»

Questions for Discussion:

- Who are people that have helped you know the love of God through their words and actions? Try naming specific moments or experiences when they showed you the love of God.
- How would you define love – or what it means to love God and to love another person? Do some of the descriptions of the meaning of love in the presentation resonate with you in particular?
- What do you think about showing love to others through actions and not just words? Have you ever experienced a situation where someone used their words to profess love but didn't really follow up with actions? How did that make you feel? Have you ever witnessed a person whose loving actions were more powerful than words?
- Have you ever shown love to someone that you don't like or that you find difficult to love?
- What do you think about Dorothy Day's statement: "I really only love God as much as I love the person that I love the least."? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What was your reaction to the claim that our relationships with people can have powerful and transformative effects on someone's life, potentially showing to them what it means to be loved by others and by God? Have you ever experienced this? Have you ever experienced the opposite?