

FR.TK REFLECTIONS 30th SUNDAY YEAR A 2020.

Today let us take one of the beautiful yet demanding theme: THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

As we go through a few points on these two great commandments let's not lose the focus on last Sunday's controversy between the Sadducees and the Herodians against Jesus and how they tried to trap him, thus putting him on the wrong side of the political establishment of the time. The owners of the Law in today's Gospel took over, the Pharisees, these were the CUSTODIANS OF THE JEWISH LAW.

Having been informed on how Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Long-Bearded Pharisee came forward equipped with all 613 Jewish commandments, 365 **prohibitions** and over 250 **ordinances**. He knew precisely what the law says yet he went ahead and tried to trap Jesus. He wanted to know the greatest commandment and how Jesus took it, whether he was following the teaching or not. The teaching was very straight forward, beginning with the great **SHAMAH**-the Jewish profession of faith:

Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God

The Lord is One

Love the Lord your God with all HEART, SOUL and MIGHT.

Any faithful Jew will say these words in the **morning and at nightfall** every day of his life. This is the **FIRST SENTENCE** a child learns. They are the utterance with which every Jew is supposed to **breathe his last**.

The same profession is found in Islam: **NONE TO BE WORSHIPPED EXCEPT ALLAH, AND MOHAMMED IS HIS PROPHET (La ila allah ila Mohammed resul allah) all Muslims MUST KNOW THIS. The long-bearded Pharisee had forgotten that Jesus came from the same background and culture** and above all, he had command of Deuteronomy as well as the quote from Leviticus which completes the process of LOVE , **You must love your Neighbor as yourself**. These two complement each other. They are the two keys where the whole of Christianity stands and rotates. Jesus put all the Jewish commandments, mosaic Ten Commandments under the two LOVE OF GOD AND LOVE OF NEIGHBOR THUS SUMMARIZING EVERYTHING.

Simply we must love God fully and totally thus subjecting ourselves to Him with all our HEART, SOUL, and MIGHT. That is total SUBMISSION OUT OF LOVE. We must

move a step further to the COMMUNUAL RESPONSIBILITY of our faith which is LOVING THE NEIGHBOUR. How can we love God whom we cannot see at the expense of humanity who are within and around us? There is need to go beyond that private personal spirituality independent of the world. He is calling us to be part of the community of faith extending compassion to others. He is calling us to be agents of **peace, justice, and love** as we are being told in the first reading. Thus, God will stand for THE POOR , THE MALAIGNED ORPHANS and THE WIDOW. This is then the mission of the church, this is your mission. We do not need that spirituality of Isolation from the world. He is telling you **TO BE SALT OF EARTH, AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD, LEAVEN TO ALL. WHATEVER YOU DID TO THE LEAST OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS YOU DID TO ME.** This is the commission of the gospel today.

We identify ourselves with God, not with emotional devotion or easy inspirations which can disappear in the dark side of the soul due to challenges and temptations. It should be based on a firm foundation and SUBMISSION and SURRENDER based on LOVE, not manipulation, but spiritual maturity. The same applies to love of neighbor. It should not be based on **emotions only which** can be wiped away by **manipulation, ingratitude, deceptions, indifference, and hostility** thus keeping us away from real love and faithfulness. Our call is **TO LOVE GOD AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR.**