

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

November 3, 2024

God's Most Special Gift

Based on: Dt 6:2-6; Heb 7:23-28; Mk 12:28b-34

By Marianne Couture

Back to basics – It all comes down to love. This Sunday's readings center on love of God, self and others.

The first reading from Deuteronomy highlights Moses' directive to the Israelites to love God above all else. The reading from Hebrews, again, emphasizes Jesus as high priest and his saving power for all humankind.

Today's Gospel echoes the first reading and the commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." Jesus adds a second commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Everything God expects from us as children of God depends on these two commandments. They sum up the Ten Commandments. Love makes the commandments work.

Jesus knows we sometimes like thinking only of ourselves and that showing love can be difficult. It demands great sacrifice. But he will not abandon us. Jesus gave us the church, the sacraments – especially the Eucharist – and the grace of the Holy Spirit to help us grow and prosper in our faith and make it easier to show that love.

God's love is a most special gift. It cannot be earned nor is it deserved. It is sharing in God's life and marks us for his service. God's love is not just for us individually but for everyone. We cannot love God without loving those whom he loves.

Loving others is not merely giving things to them. We must see others as persons whom God loves and whom we in turn must love. They may not be our favorite people; they may even be our enemies; they may be people who need our particular help – but God loves them. If God totally loves these people so troublesome to us and we realize he accepts us, even with our faults, then we can surely try to love others. Unless love is shared, it cannot grow.

Consider the example of St. Mother Teresa. She constantly renewed her capacity to love others – even the most downtrodden – by her love for the eucharistic Lord. And, we need only look at the crucifix to see the greatest example of love – Christ's arms outstretched and open for love of each of us – with no exclusions.

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