

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time-A-2020  
Ex.22.20-26//1Thess.1.5-10//Matt.22.34-40

→without a doubt this has probably been the most unusual, unexpected, challenging and difficult year for all of us....

→at this time last year...none of us would have ever thought that our lives would change as they have...

→in March when all of this really began to happen...it was our hope that it wouldn't last long...

→and now today...we continue to deal with uncertainty...and a desire for some sort of end to come soon.

→2020 has certainly been a year...and many have described it in a variety of ways...some colorful and some not so colorful...

→I was recently interviewed and asked how I would best describe this year.... and without being too negative or superficial...I came up with....everything about 2020 is basically out of alignment.

→from daily life...to work....sporting events to family gatherings....shopping to going on vacation....

→things just aren't quite right...and everything seems to be out of balance...out of alignment.....

→[and] as we hear this week from today's gospel...things aren't in balance or alignment when it came to the people around Jesus...//....because just like last week, they are trying to trap J. by their question's

→once again...we find the Pharisee's traveling down the road of life with their minds, bodies, and souls all out of alignment

PAUSE

→for a second week in a row...they attempt to trip Jesus up by asking a question.

→last week it was whether to pay the tax to Caesar or not...today we hear about a lawyer asking Jesus to state a priority among the numerous laws [600 different laws to be exact] that the Jewish people were expected to observe

→[now] the lawyer, in asking his question, knows full well that Jesus will be unable to answer it and so in reality the lawyer is trying to humiliate Jesus

→and yet, Jesus instantaneously replies to the lawyer

→"contrary to what you teach, there is a priority among the rules that govern human actions"

***→you shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, w/all your mind...and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.***

→you see, the Pharisee's at the time of Jesus were very much like this current year....they were out of alignment, out of touch, out of balance when it came to Gospel message

→they had become so wrapped up in following the rules and laws of their faith that they had forgotten the most fundamental, and central commandment of what life is all about

→and so, when they asked Christ this question, his answer goes RIGHT to the heart of their lopsided beliefs

...AND likewise THE ANSWER CHRIST GIVES ALSO GOES RIGHT TO THE HEART OF OUR LIVES as well

→it hits us at the central core of our being.....

→because very much like the answer Jesus gave last week, his words are much more challenging than they would seem to indicate

*PAUSE*

→loving God with all our heart, soul and mind is tough to do

→it calls for a continuous effort on our part to accept the will of God in our lives, and the message of the Gospel in its entirety....[and] that's not easy to do

→in fact, it seems easier at times, to do just the opposite, and reject the will of God and disregard the message of the Gospel in our lives.

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→loving God with our whole heart, mind and soul means discovering and enriching our faith

→it means loving God actively in our lives....and putting the will of God in our lives first over our own desires and wishes and wants

→and then, if that isn't hard enough, Jesus bestows his listeners with a second commandment...  
*"love your neighbor as yourself".....*

→[and] we all know how difficult that is to do....[don't we?]

→[because] that means I got to love those who bring out the worst in me, who insult me and talk about me, who rub me the wrong way, and those who get on my nerves,

...Jesus tell us that we got to love them...as much as we love ourselves

→yet in reality aren't those people that we need to love the most?

→you know as well as I do, that is mighty hard to do and yet as people of Christ that is what we are being called to do

→...//...the challenge that is set before us today.

→and we might ask....how do we meet this challenge in today's world...how do we incorporate that challenge into our lives completely?

→I sure wish I had the perfect answer for that...but what we can do is try to become the best person we possibly can be

→because you see...that is when we are at our best

and that is what we need to work towards, what we need to continually believe in and to have faith in...

→because when we can find it in our hearts and soul to love...it is then that we are truly at our best

PAUSE

→in the end, the greatest and the only commandment is to "love God with your whole heart, and mind and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself

→very simply put, that is what we to strive for, that is what we need to be about as people on this earth

→and until we achieve that --- we will simply remain just like the Pharisee's in today's gospel....we will be much like what this year has been about...unfortunately we will be out of alignment...out of balance....and out of sorts.