

## **Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 07-13-2025**

In the gospel today a scholar of the law asked Jesus what he must do in order to inherit eternal life.

Jesus asked him in return, "What is written in the law?"

And he responded, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus affirmed the scholar saying, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

Jesus and the law for that matter are very clear that love of God must precede and exceed love of self and neighbor.

The emphasis of the law is obviously on love of God first and foremost and only then can we possibly hope to love our ourselves and our neighbor as ourselves.

Saint Mother Teresa gave us many examples of this.

I'm sure most of you already know that Mother Teresa served the most rejected and despised people of India.

Many of these people lived in the filthiest conditions imaginable.

One day she was being shadowed by a reporter as she was ministering to the poorest of the poor.

At the end of very grueling day, the reporter looked at Mother Teresa and said, "Mother, I wouldn't do what you do for all the money in the world." And she responded saying, "Neither would I."

Mother Teresa wasn't working for anything created – not love of money, self or neighbor – she was laboring for love of God alone.

For her any riches or praise that she might gain were being stored up in heaven.

And she realized as much as anyone that love of God had to come before love of self, neighbor or anything else.

This was demonstrated by another story about Mother Teresa and the order she founded – the Missionaries of Charity.

According to their rule of life the sisters were to spend at least two hours everyday in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in addition to the attendance of daily Mass and the daily recitation of the divine office.

So, they would close their doors every day and observe the dictates of the rule.

However, as it would so often occur, when they would return to minister to the people they would inevitably find someone near the convent, even sometimes lying at the door, who had died in the meantime without anyone to assist them in their last agony.

You can imagine that this was painful for the sisters and led them to discuss what they might do to remedy the situation.

Some suggested that they reduce the time spent daily in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by one hour.

However, Mother Teresa had another idea.

She recommended that rather than reduce their time in adoration they would be better off adding an hour instead.

Mother knew very well that if the sisters took their eyes off of Jesus they would sooner or later take her eyes off of the people they serve as well.

We must love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, with all our being, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and then, and only then, will we be able to love our neighbor as ourselves.

If we do this in the proper order, then like Saint Mother Teresa, we too will become saints and inherit eternal life.