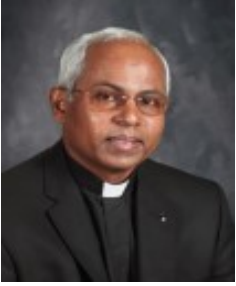


A Message From Fr. Francis

"Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength"



My Dear Friends In Christ!

"Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus responds by affirming the centrality of love: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This passage invites us to reflect deeply on the essence of our faith and the core of our calling.

The scribe's question highlights a search for meaning and guidance in the difficulties of life. Jesus' response refines the enormity of the law into two essential commandments. This overview reveals that at the heart of our relationship with God lies love—love that is total, unwavering, and all-encompassing.

For many of us, these words were etched on in minds and hearts at a very young age. Hopefully, this continues to be true today. However, these words are so very familiar to us that we may not even hear them. In essence, Jesus asks only two things of us: to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The challenge in Jesus' statement is that our focus in life may be very divided. How many times a day do I think about God, Jesus, or the Spirit? Do I take or make time to pray every day? Do I pray once, twice, several times a day, or not at all? Then ask yourself: Am I happy with my responses? If not, do you want to make more effort to pray and spend time with God, Jesus, or the Spirit? Or are you content with your life as it is? As we reflect on this teaching, we are called to examine our own lives. How do we express our love for God? Is it through prayer, worship, and acts of service? Are we open to recognizing His presence in our daily lives, allowing our hearts to be transformed by that love? Do I consciously strive to love every person I encounter, even the individuals I may not like?

Additionally, the command to love our neighbor challenges us to move beyond mere tolerance. It calls us to compassion, empathy, and action. In a world often divided by conflict, prejudice, and indifference, the call to love becomes even more urgent. Each encounter with another person is an opportunity to live out this commandment, reflecting God's love in tangible ways. Hopefully, the time we spend with God each day makes us more aware of the people we encounter every day. God's love for us and our love for God should flow out from us to the individuals and the people with whom we interact, work and live.

May we strive to live out this commandment, allowing it to guide our choices and relationships, leading us closer to God and one another. Let us ask the help of Our Lady so that like her, we too may have a total and authentic love towards God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, manifested as well in our love for our neighbor.

See you at Mass!
Fr. Francis

