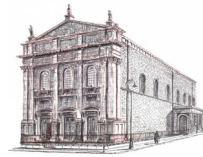




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
24TH/25TH OCTOBER 2020



Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:
 Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council
E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie **Website:** www.stagathasparish.ie

Jesus I Trust in You

POPE SAYS:

LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR FUNDAMENTAL TO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Pope Francis reflected that love is the cornerstone of Jesus' teaching when speaking on the Gospel of the Day (Matt 22:34-40), in which a doctor of the Law asks Jesus which is "the great commandment"? Jesus responds by saying, "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind" and "You will love your neighbour as yourself".

TWO FUNDAMENTAL PRECEPTS

Pope Francis explained that by using these two fundamental precepts, Jesus "establishes two essential cornerstones for believers of all times. The first is that moral and religious life cannot be reduced to an anxious and forced obedience, but must have love as its principle. The second is that love must tend together and inseparably towards God and neighbour." The Pope went on to say that "This is one of Jesus' primary innovations and it helps us understand that what is not expressed in love of neighbour is not true love of God; and, likewise, what is not drawn from one's relationship with God is not true love of neighbour."

TWOFOLD INDIVISIBLE LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR

Concluding his answer, Jesus says, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets". On this point, Pope Francis said "This means that all the precepts the Lord has given to his people must be related to love of God and neighbour." In fact, he added, "all the commandments serve to implement and express that twofold indivisible love. Love for God is expressed above all in prayer, particularly in adoration. And love for neighbour, which is also called fraternal charity, consists in closeness, listening, sharing, caring for others," said the Pope.

JESUS AND THE SOURCE OF LOVE

In today's Gospel, Pope Francis underlined, "once again, Jesus helps us to go to the living and gushing source of Love. This spring is God himself, to be loved totally in a communion that nothing and no one can break." "Communion is a gift to be invoked every day," he continued, "but also a personal commitment so that our life does not allow itself to be enslaved by the idols of this world." The Pope stressed that "the verification of our journey of conversion and holiness is always in the love of our neighbour. As long as there is a brother or sister to whom we close our hearts, we will still be far from being disciples as Jesus asks of us." Pope Francis concluded by saying that God's "divine mercy does not allow us to be discouraged, on the contrary, He calls us to begin again every day in order to live the Gospel consistently." (Vatican News).

LOVE'S PROFIT LIES IN ITS PRACTICE

In today's Gospel (Matt 22:34-40), Jesus says that the greatest and most important commandment is *to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind*. The second commandment resembles it, in that, *we must love our neighbour as our self. The whole Law hangs on these two commandments*. According to Jesus, the commandments are vital to Christian living, because He specifically came into the world to fulfil the Law, in the Spirit of Love, and God is Love. To practice Faith is to practice Love, which spiritually profits our hearts.

DENY OURSELVES NOW AND REAP THE REWARDS LATER

In many situations, to practice love, is to deny ourselves for the good of others. The First Reading today (Exodus 22:20-26), reminds us that love is not just emotional or romantic, but involves treating every person with the greatest of respect and compassion. Christian love must reach out to those who challenge us to like them. Jesus calls us to put our selfish emotions aside and imitate Him, by loving and forgiving our enemies. This is so hard to do, but if done for the sake of the Kingdom, and to do the Will of God, then it becomes a sacrifice pleasing to God, for the spiritual benefit of our immortal souls. The reward will be eternal life in Heaven.

SELF-LOVE PROFITS DEATH ONLY

St. Paul reminds us today that as Christians (1 Thessalonians 1:5-10), we *broke with idolatry*, meaning that we stopped immersing ourselves in self-love, which puts ourselves above and before God and our neighbour. What Jesus proposes are not just commands but a whole approach to life and to our relationship with each other. Jesus identifies Himself with people who are in most need of love and compassion. He is also to be loved in the weak, such as, the drug addict, the alcoholic, the poor, the homeless soul, who are all looking for help. Let us not judge anybody, because when we sin, we become weak too and need God's Help and Mercy to return us to spiritual health and wellbeing.

POPE FRANCIS EMBRACES ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

Pope Francis reminds us this week to treat nobody as an outcast. He talked about same sex attraction brethren, who are all to be treated as children of God and also as brothers and sisters of Jesus. The Church, with no exception, embraces everybody with open arms of love, but it is important to know that Mother Church does not embrace any sin and in particular, the sin of lust. Our bodies are temples and its purpose is to adore God and not to adore each other, especially in immoral acts of sexual impurity, which is not an act of love. This is also true in heterosexual partnerships. All true love is a manifestation or a revelation of God's presence in our relationships.

FAITH IS KEY TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

It is only when we become aware of this, through conversion of faith, that we realise what pleases God and what offends Him. In this conversion moment in faith, we become like the one leper who returned to God (Lk 17:11-19), realising the Gift of Life, Jesus had given him, and said *thank you*. It is like he said to Jesus; *You have changed my life, my whole way of thinking and I will now begin to change and live Your Way and not my own selfish way again*. Jesus said to the leper, *Rise and go; your faith has made you well*. In other words, faith enlightens our corrupt mind and heals our souls, making them well enough to enter heaven someday. A spiritually unwell soul cannot directly enter Heaven without Jesus' healing touch in the Sacrament of Confession. That is why in Mass, we say before receiving the Virginal Body of Christ, clothed in Eucharistic Flesh; *Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the Word, and my soul shall be HEALED*. The *Word* is found in absolution.

OUR LIFE SHOULD BE HINGED ON TRUE LOVE

Faith is our response to Jesus' call to repent, to change our sinful ways and to be healed by Him. To participate and tune into Mass every Sunday, but not participate and tune in to exercising love of neighbour or enemy, is not good enough in God's eyes. The more of God's Divine Wisdom revealed to us in the Gospels, then the more is expected of us. We must put God first and foremost in our lives. He, and nobody else, will get us to Heaven someday. The temptation to indulge in self-love, which benefits ourselves and not those around us is corrupt. Padre Pio said that *the disorderly love of self-promotes our ego and pride, which are the roots of all sin*. St. Therese of Liseaux said, that *our Vocation, to serve Christ and our neighbour, is hinged on Love*. Mother Teresa reminded us, *to love until it hurts!* God bless, Fr. Brendan.