

## **30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A**

**OCTOBER 24-25, 2026**

Exodus 22:20-26

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Matthew 22:34-40

### **THEME: THE GENUINE LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I welcome you all to this Eucharistic celebration. This Sunday, Mother Church puts before us the heart of everything — **LOVE**. Not love as the world sings about it in songs, but love as Jesus lived it.

#### **A. THE LAW BECOMES LOVE**

In the first reading, God tells Israel: Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the stranger. Why? Because you were once strangers in Egypt. God was reminding them — your law must have a human face.

The Pharisees in the Gospel counted 613 laws. They were experts in law but beginners in love. So one of them, to test Jesus, asks: "**Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?**"

Jesus does not give a new law. He gives them the heart of the law: "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**"

Theology tells us in Ten Commandments: The first three Commandments are vertical — love of God. The other seven are horizontal — love of neighbor. Jesus puts the cross together. You cannot separate them. If you love God truly, you will love His image — your neighbor.

#### **B. MY 2004 STORY - WHERE IS GOD?**

This reminds me of 2004 when I was preparing for my First Holy Communion. Our Catechist said, "Love God and love your neighbor." I was small, I raised my hand: "Catechist, where is God? I want to see Him so that I can love Him."

My classmates laughed at me. But the Catechist was wise. He opened Genesis chapter one, took us outside the church building. He showed us trees, clouds, the beauty of creation. Then he told us to look at each other's faces.

He said:

1. God made everything.
2. God gave us life.
3. God is Spirit — you cannot see Him like you see a physical thing. But you see Him in what He made. And the most beautiful thing He made is YOU and ME — the human being made in His image and likeness (Gen 1:27).

My dear people, that answer still guides me today. Do you want to see God in Mishawaka? Look at the person sitting next to you. Look at your wife, your husband, your child, your neighbor on the seat, the homeless person on Main Street. That is where God hides Himself.

St. John says it clearly: "If you say you love God whom you do not see, but hate your brother or sister whom you see, you are a liar" (1 John 4:20).

### **C. SWEET BUT TRUE - WHAT IS TRUE LOVE?**

St. Paul calls this **AGAPE LOVE**, Agape — willful, self-giving, sacrificial love that seeks nothing in return.

How does it look in daily life in the world?

1. **True love is not selfish:** False love asks "What will I get?" True love asks, "What can I give?" In family: husband helps wife wash dishes not because he must, but because he loves.

2. **True love is sacrificial:** It costs. Jesus on the cross is true love. In our homes, parents waking at 2am for a crying baby — that is sacrificial love.

3. **True love is active, not only in words:** 1 John 3:18 — "Love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." In good actions towards others.

4. **True love is patient and forgiving:** 1 Cor 13 — love keeps no record of wrongs of the other. True love deletes the file.

5. **True love is truthful:** It does not clap for evil. We keep telling the truth to each other.

6. **True love is universal:** Matthew 5:44 — Love your enemies. Not only loving the people close to you by relationship, but also others and your enemies. In true love, "You are my brother, my sister because God made you."

7. **True love is permanent, not seasonal:** Some people love you in summer, but forget you in winter. True love is permanent. It is every day.

8. **True love leads to God:** 1 John 4:7. True love makes us pray more, serve more, adore God more, and love God more, because God already loves us every day.

### **CONCLUSION**

My brothers and sisters, today Jesus gives us an exam with only two questions: Do you love God? Do you love your neighbor? You cannot pass one and fail one. The two go together like breathing in and breathing out.

Let us ask Mother Mary, who loved God with all her heart and loved us as her children at the foot of the cross, and St. Bavo, our patron, to make our hearts soft, to continue loving God and our neighbors.