

Friday 3rd of Lent

Gospel text (Mk 12,28b-34): A teacher of the Law came up and asked to Jesus, «Which commandment is the first of all?». Jesus answered, «The first is: ‘Hear, Israel! The Lord, our God, is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength’. And after this comes another one: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’. There is no commandment greater than these two».

The teacher of the Law said to him, «Well spoken, Master; you are right when you say that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all our heart, with all our understanding and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves is more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice». Jesus approved this answer and said, «You are not far from the kingdom of God». But after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

«There is no commandment greater than these two»

Fr. Pere MONTAGUT i Piquet
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Lenten liturgy presents us Love as the deepest root of our self-communication with God: «Our soul cannot live without love, it always wants to love something, for our soul is made of love, as I made it because of love» (Saint Catherine of Siena). God is almighty love, extreme love, crucified love: «It is there [on the Cross] that this truth can be contemplated» (Benedict XVI). This Gospel is not only a confirmation of the prayer the pious Jew used to say every morning, but it is also a self revelation as to how God —through his Son— wants to be loved. With a Commandment from Deuteronomy: «Love the Lord your God» (Deut 6:5) and another one from Leviticus: «Love your neighbor as yourself» (Lv 19:18), Jesus enforces the plenitude of the Law. He loves the Father, as a true God born out of a real God and, as the Word made Flesh, He creates the new Mankind of the sons of

God, brothers loving each other with the love of the Son.

Jesus' call to communion and to the mission requires our participation in its very same nature; it is a closeness where to get ourselves in. Jesus does not vindicate him as the milestone of our prayer and of our love. He thanks the Father and constantly lives in his presence. The mystery of Christ attracts us towards the love for God, invisible and inaccessible, while —at the same time— it shows us the way to identify our sincerity in our love and life for our visible and present brother. The burnt offerings in the altar are not the most valued ones, but Christ burning as the unique sacrifice and offering, so that we may become in Him a single altar, a single love.

This unity of knowledge and love woven by the Saint Spirit allows God to love through us and to use all our capacities, while allowing us to be able to love as Christ does, with the same filial and fraternal love. What God united in love, man cannot sever. This is the greatness of he who submits to the Kingdom of God: self love is no longer an obstacle but rapture to love the one and only God and a crowd of brothers.