

Friday of the Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 22,34-40): When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

«You shall love the Lord, your God... You shall love your neighbor as yourself»

Fr. Pere CALMELL i Turet
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, a teacher of the law asks Jesus “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” (Mt 22:36), the most important one is the first commandment. The answer, however, speaks of a first commandment and of a second commandment, which is very similar to it. Two rings inseparable, which are the same thing. Inseparable, but a first one and a second one, a golden one and a silver one. The Lord takes us to the depths of Christian catechesis, because “The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (Mt 22:40).

This could explain the classic commentary of the two woods of the Lord's Cross: the upright beam stuck in the soil is the verticality, looking at heaven towards God. The crossbar represents the horizontality, the relations with our fellowmen. In this image there is also a first and a second. Horizontality would be at ground level if we should not have before stuck a vertical beam, so the more we desire to raise the level of our service to others —horizontality— the taller our love for God must go. Otherwise, dejection, fickleness, demanding compensations of any kind, will get easily hold of us. St. John of the Cross says: “The more a soul loves, the more perfect is in what it loves; this is why in this soul that is already perfect, is entirely love and all its actions are love.”

The saints we know allow us to see how, in fact, their love for God is expressed in many different ways, and gives them a great amount of initiative when it comes to helping their fellowmen. Today, let us ask the Mother of God to fill us with the desire of surprising Our Lord with deeds and words of affection. Thus, our heart will be able to discover how to surprise with some nice little detail those who live and work next to us, and not only in their festivity, for that everybody knows how to do it. To give a surprise! A practical way to think less about ourselves.