



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 29 October 2023

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today's Gospel speaks to us about the *greatest of the commandments* (cf. Mt 22:34-40). A doctor of the law questions Jesus about this and He responds with the "great commandment of love": "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" and "your neighbour as yourself" (vv. 37, 39). Love of God and neighbour are inseparable from each other. Let us pause a bit to reflect on this.

The first one, the fact that love for the Lord comes first, reminds us that *God always precedes us*, he anticipates us with his infinite tenderness (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), with his closeness, with his mercy, for he is always near, tender and merciful. Babies learn to love on their mother's and father's knees, and we do so in God's arms. The Psalm says, "Like a weaned child in their mother's arms" (cf. 131:2). This is how we should feel in God's arms. And there, we absorb the Lord's affection. There, we encounter the love that impels us to give ourselves generously. Saint Paul recalls this when he says that Christ's charity possesses a power that propels toward loving (cf. 2 Cor 5:14). And everything originates in him. You cannot truly love others if you do not have this root, which is God's love, Jesus' love.

And now the second aspect that emerges from the commandment of love. It connects love of God

to love of neighbour: it means that by loving our brothers and sisters, we reflect the Father's love like mirrors. *To reflect God's love*, this is the point — to love he whom we do not see through the brother/sister we do see (cf. 1 Jn 4:20). One day, Saint Teresa of Calcutta replied to a journalist who had asked her if she had illusions about changing the world through what she was doing: "I never thought I could change the world! I only wanted to be a drop of clean water, through which God's love could shine" (Meeting with journalists after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Rome, 1979). This is how she, who was so little, was able to do so much good — by reflecting God's love like a drop [of water]. And if while looking at her and other saints, we might sometimes be tempted to think that they are inimitable heroes, let us think again about this small drop: love is a drop that can change many things. And how can this be done? Taking the first step, always. Sometimes it is not easy to take the first step, to forget things..., to take the first step. Let's do that! This is the drop: to take the first step.

So, dear brothers and sisters, thinking about God's love that always precedes us, we can ask ourselves: Am I grateful to the Lord, who loves me first? Do I feel God's love and am I grateful to him? And do I try to reflect his love? Do I strive to love my brothers and sisters, to take this second step?

May the Virgin Mary help us live the great commandment of love in our daily life: to love and to allow God to love us, and to love our brothers and sisters.

After praying the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank all those who — in so many places and in various ways — joined the day of fasting, prayer and penance that we shared last Friday, to implore peace for the world. Let us not stop. Let us continue to pray for Ukraine, as well as for the serious situation in Palestine and Israel, and for other regions at war. Particularly, in Gaza, may places be set aside to guarantee humanitarian aid, and may the hostages be released right away. Let no one abandon the possibility that weapons may be silenced. Let there be a ceasefire! Father Ibrahim Faltas — I heard him recently on the [television] program, *A Sua Immagine* — Father Ibrahim said: "Cease fire! Cease fire"! He is the vicar of the Holy Land. With Father Ibrahim, let us, too, say: ceasefire! Stop, brothers and sisters! War is always a defeat — always!

I am near to the people in the area of Acapulco, Mexico, who were hit by a very powerful hurricane. I am praying for the victims, for their families and for those who have sustained serious harm. May the Virgin of Guadalupe sustain her children in this hardship.

I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from many parts of the world. In particular, I greet the parents of "children in Heaven" from Torano Nuovo, the faithful from

Campana, the vocational group “Talità Kum” from the parish of Saint John of the Florentines in Rome, the Confirmation candidates from Slovenia and those from Gandosso, as well as the pilgrimage of the Daughters of Saint Camillus and the Ministers of the Sick.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*