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YOU SHALL LOVE
YOUR NEIGHBOR
as yourself.”

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October 31, 2021 | Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dt 6:2-6 | Heb 7:23-28 | Mk 12:28b-34

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

“Oh no,” was my first thought when I began reading today’s Gospel – “another scribe trying to trick Jesus.” But this scribe agrees with Jesus: Loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself are the greatest commandments. When the scribe explains that loving God and your neighbor are worth more than all offerings or sacrifices, Jesus recognizes that the scribe took these commandments “to heart,” as Moses had taught. He doesn’t just *know* the law, he *understands* it. Because he understands it, Jesus assures him that he is not far from the kingdom of God. So, how can *we* grow in our understanding of what it means to love God and love our neighbor? We do this by spending time with Scripture and “taking to heart” his words; by prayerfully reflecting on Jesus’ life and giving thanks for his sacrifice for us; by drawing closer to him through the sacraments; and by asking him to help us grow in our love for God, and for one another. An authentic love for God will show itself in love of neighbor, and the more we truly love one another, the greater our love for God will grow.

PRAY As we prepare for the feast of All Souls, make an effort to see others as God sees them by reflecting on the lives of those who have loved you and what their lives have taught you about God’s love. Attend Mass and give thanks for those you hold in your heart. Then pray honestly and sincerely for those with whom you know you have a difference of conviction or opinion, asking God to graciously answer all their needs and to care for them as you yourself would like to be cared for.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Loving our neighbors is essential if we seek to draw them to God’s love. For many of us, that’s much easier said than done. It’s not easy to love someone with whom we disagree or are in competition with. And these days, with so much division in society, it is all too simple to assume the worst rather than the best about others with whom we interact, or see on television. Can we commit to truly seeing others as God sees them – his beloved children, made in his own image? After all, it is through Jesus and in keeping his word that we become more like him, in thought and deed: “Whoever loves me will keep my word ... and my father will love him and we will come to him.” Let us pray to see our neighbors as the Lord does; and pray that we ourselves might be the kind of neighbor in whom others may see God’s image! We have the opportunity to be an example of, and a witness to, a love that forgives and is not overcome by fear or division.