

Sunday of Advent

Reading: Matthew 22: 34-40

Meditation

Life is full of so many rules. All the laws of all the governments. All the little rules of the road that we have to memorize to get our driver's license. The income tax code that is so complicated that the congressmen and women who "wrote" it have to hire accountants to fill out their own tax forms!

The Church has many rules too. The Old Testament, especially, is full of laws and rules that God gave the Jews to live by. There are many rules during Lent – about not eating meat and not having loud parties, for example. The Church has rules on how often we should receive communion and how. Or when to stand or sit during services. In today's reading, Jesus provides a short and simple way to do what God wants. He gives us the most important commandment of all: love God.

Why should we love God? Because God is everything that is good and because he loves us. We know that he loves us because he sent his son Jesus to teach us and to suffer and die for us.

And we have to love God with every part of our being. We have to love God with all our heart--to feel within us our love for him. We have to love God with all our soul—to feel the love in the part of us that will live forever. And we have to love God with all our mind—to understand our love for him and to understand what comes out of that love.

What comes out of our love for God is shown by the second commandment. We treat other people—our neighbors—with love, understanding and respect. We treat other people as we would ourselves. We all care for ourselves and want good things to happen to us. When we truly love God, we treat other people in the same way.

Following these two commandments is truly an all-embracing way to follow God and to thank him for sending us his Son. And observing these commandments is the way to be with Christ when he comes again, not as the simple carpenter and preacher, but as the king and the judge, when this world ends and the kingdom of God begins.

Prayer

*Jesus you taught us so much.
You taught us love through your sacrifice.
You showed us the straightest path to the Father,
Through love for him and for our neighbor.
May we have the strength to follow your example
and your path,
So that we may be worthy to be chosen by you,
When you return as our king and judge.*

For reflection

How do I show God that I love him?

What do I do that shows love for my neighbor?

In what ways have I given of my time and talents to others?
