

Homily
St. John Eudes
August 19, 2022

Many, many years ago, long before I was ordained or even married, I was on a path of learning my faith. At one point, I believed I understood the bible. And I had this brilliant, original idea, or so I thought. I told a friend that the bible could be summed up in one word. He said that it was impossible, but before he could finish denouncing my assertion, I blurted out, "Love." He stopped and agreed. How can you not say the bible is all about Love.

Decades later, I still believe this, but I also understand that there is so much contained in this one, simple, powerful word. Even Jesus understands how we, simple-minded creatures, need more than a simple word to describe all creation, Salvation History and God's relationship with man.

In today's Gospel, Jesus shares with us the greatest law, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." And, of course, we can't have this first law without the second, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The word, Love, needs explaining, context, clarification. The entirety of Sacred Scripture is just that, the fleshing out of the word Love. God is Love, but we simple-minded creatures need some God-splaining.

One of the ways God helps us understand His love for us and His desire for us to Love Him and each other is through the powerful intercession of Saints. Today, we celebrate the feast of St. John Eudes, a 17th century French priest who founded several orders and seminaries focused on the sanctity of the priesthood and himself preached many missions across France. He had a specific devotion to the Sacred Hearts, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He was a popular evangelist and confessor. His devotion to the people of God is a strong testament to the Love God has for all His children.

The cause for his canonization commenced in 1868. He was titled Servant of God in 1874, Venerable in 1903, beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1925. In 2012, his supporters were finally successful in a path for his being named Doctor of the Church, which is still under consideration today.

Love is a simple word for simple people like us. But it is in the choices we make that turn that word into a reality that glorifies God and empowers His people. Love can be expressed in many ways. How will we choose to express the Love God wants for all of us? We best express that Love by taking our freely offered God-given gifts and use them to glorify God and inspire each other.

I love researching the saints, contemplating scripture and proclaiming the Gospel. And I hope my message today, and every time I preach, reaches you, inspires you, to be the best person God desires you to be. I often say that when I preach, I'm preaching to myself, and if you can pick something out of my message that inspires you, that's icing on the cake. My prayer is that we hear what God is trying to say to us, take it with us and use it to make a better world, a world of Love that leads us to that place God has prepared for us in eternal life.