

Homily
Madonna Manor
Monday of the 15th Week in OT
July 17, 2023

Who has ever had a disagreement with someone you love? Of course, we all have. That doesn't mean we don't care about them or love them; it just means we are different. We are all made in the image and likeness of God, but that doesn't mean we are all the same.

I love my wife, but we are very different people. We have different likes and dislikes. We often disagree on what I'm supposed to be doing – but I've learned she is always right. My go-to phrase is, "Yes, dear."

Just because we are all made in God's image doesn't mean we are all alike. God has gifted us all differently, with many varied skills, desires, even cravings. We are all different yet we are all made in the image and likeness of the same God of the Universe, Who is Love. Yes, we are made in the image and likeness of Love.

When Jesus tells us that we are not worthy of Him if we love our parents or spouses or children more than Him, He doesn't mean that we aren't to love them; He's speaking in degrees. We are to love God first, and then love our mother, our father, our wife, our husband, our children, our neighbor, yes, even our enemies just as we love ourselves. God comes first.

Remember the Greatest Commandment Jesus tells us also in Matthew's Gospel, "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."

Then He continues, "The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Why does God tell us to first love Him before our neighbor? Because we are imperfect creatures; we have a disordered understanding of just what love is. If we loved God and neighbor perfectly, as God loves us perfectly, we would also be perfect. But we aren't. Well, my wife is almost perfect.

God understands this and has provided us with the tools we need to help us in our struggle to love perfectly.

He gives us the Word proclaimed, the very Word of God, His own Son, Jesus in His own words.

He gives us the Sacraments: Baptism to remove Original Sin; Confession to restore us to grace after falling into sin; the Eucharist to heal us and strengthen us on our journey.

He gives us the saints as models to follow, who themselves were imperfect, but demonstrated heroic courage, faith and strength.

He gives us each other, the Body of Christ, of whom we are all members. We struggle together, we grow together, we love each other together.

We will never love perfectly, but we are called to be perfect, so we begin by loving God Who loves us more than we could ever understand. We begin by saying, "Lord, I love you."