

Homily  
Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent  
March 8, 2024

Who can say they truly love God “with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Trick question – It’s not possible for us in our frail human earthly existence. Can we use His gifts of time, talent and treasure to build up the kingdom of God. Are we thankful? Do we comprehend fully God’s will? Can we by ourselves be 100% grateful for God and everything He has done for us, given us, allows to happen to us, even evil? Do we understand fully God’s love for us, as expressed in scripture and in His creation all around us? Are we holding nothing back from God, giving of ourselves freely and completely, no strings attached? This is the essence of the Greatest Commandment.

So why would Jesus give us what seems to be this impossible command?

And then Jesus doubles down with the second, equally impossible command: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Now, I love my wife. But I know I could do a better job of loving her. So why don’t I? I try and sometimes I fail. I love my neighbor; but that can often be very difficult when I feel slighted or offended. Everyday, I have the opportunity to love as God has commanded me to love. And yet, I fail time after time. So how can any of us successfully comply?

We can’t on our own. Yesterday, Jesus told us, “Whoever is not with me is against me...” And in John Chapter 14, Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” In the next Chapter, Jesus tells us, “...without me you can do nothing.” And if that isn’t enough, Jesus gives Himself to us, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Sacrament we are about to receive.

We are all here only because God loves us, each and every one of us, completely, unreservedly, without strings attached. He can’t help it because He is love. We would cease to exist if it wasn’t for God’s love. And as we are made in God’s likeness and image, we are meant to love. We are built to love. It’s in our nature. And at the same time, because of Original Sin (thank you so much, Adam and Eve) we are also capable of not loving as God intends.

As we continue our Lenten journey, we recall our sinfulness, we seek repentance through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we pursue virtue and we pay for our sinfulness and for the sins of the whole world. We are in this together. We are in this with Jesus. We can’t do this alone. And as long as we remain faithful, we will eventually see God face to face at His glorious banquet in heaven.