

Homily  
Friday of the 11<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
June 21, 2024

I read a story about Pietro Sarubbi, the actor who played Barabbas in *The Passion of the Christ*. Jim Caviezel came down the steps after a scene with Pontius Pilot to discuss how Jesus should act in that scene. Mel Gibson told Jim that Jesus would always express His love in all His actions and expressions. Pietro was a seasoned actor who was asked by Mel Gibson to play Barabbas. Pietro was not very happy about his role since it had no speaking parts, but he remained in character throughout, being the professional that he was. Jim returned to his position, also in character, as Pietro growled and sneered at Jim. Jim looked at Pietro with a love that immediately stopped Pietro, and, in his own words, changed his life. That's the love Jesus has for all of us, even in our growls and sneers, even in our sinfulness; even in our selfishness; even in our arrogance. That's the way Jesus looks at us all the time, no matter what we are doing, saying or thinking.

The Pharisee, the scholar of the law, asked Jesus, "which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." That is an all-encompassing love. That is love in all areas of our life. Everything we do, everything we say, everything we imagine comes from our heart, our soul and our mind. Jesus is commanding us to love God with all our being. This is the love in which Jesus loves us. This is the love that Jesus showed Barabbas during His Passion. Can we look upon our neighbor who just offended us, who just cut us off in traffic, who just insulted us to our face in front of our friends and family with that same all-encompassing love?

St. Aloysius Gonzaga was a very disciplined Christian from very early in his life. He loved prayer and was very strict with himself, often fasting and scourging himself. He served the public during the plague that would eventually take his life at the young age of 23 before he could complete his studies to become a priest. His love for God and neighbor is exemplified in his life, in his heart, his soul and his mind. We have a great example of what it means to serve God and serve our neighbor, what it means to love as Jesus commanded us to love.

We cannot love without service; they go hand in hand. We cannot love and then sit blindly as the world goes by. We must take action. This is why we come to Mass. In our weakness, we seek to be encouraged and strengthened, forgiven and blessed. We receive Jesus in His Word proclaimed and His Body and Blood freely given. And then, in love, we go into the world to be Christ for the world. This is our mission: to love and to act on that love. Today, let us show our love by what we say, what we do and how we think; let us love with our entire being.