

Homily  
31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
November 3, 2024

St. Augustine is known for saying, “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.” Let’s look more closely at this statement. God is love. In the beginning, the first words of the Old Testament, God created us and everything out of His infinite love. And then He rested. He didn’t rest because He needed rest, but because He wants us to appreciate all His gifts. He only asks us to love Him in return, by following His laws, precepts and ordinances, and we, time after time, chose our own way. Adam and Eve, the first humans, chose their own way, and we all pay the price through Original Sin. And thus began God’s journey for us, through His infinite love, of Salvation History. The Arc of the Covenant contained the Word inscribed by God’s finger, the manna, bread come down from heaven, and Aaron’s rod that budded, came back to life. Covenant after Covenant, God gave us every chance, never failing us, yet we failed Him, time after time. In the Old Testament, Jesus is hidden, the ultimate plan God has for us. Through the several Covenants, God, in His infinite love, re-committed His promise of love, mercy, prosperity and life eternal. Because of man’s frailty, our weakness, our stubbornness, we fell. We, imperfect as we are, because of Free Will, continued to make mistakes. And each time, God gave us another chance.

In the New Testament, John’s Gospel opens, “In the beginning was the Word.” Jesus, the fulfillment of God’s Covenant, the Word of God, born of the Virgin, the Arc of the New Covenant, became one of us in time, finite, fully human in all ways but sin, yet fully divine, infinitely perfect. We could not keep our side of the Covenantal bond, so God gave us His Son to fulfill that which we could not. Jesus was able to be both Priest and Sacrifice for us, fulfilling, on our behalf, our side of the Covenantal bond, the final and perfect Covenant, the perfect Bread, the New Manna, come down from heaven, resurrected after His Passion and death, just as Jesse’s rod budded. All the laws, precepts and ordinances pale in comparison to the one true and overriding law, to love. Everything else flows from love.

The first reading today reminds us to keep all God’s statutes and commandments, “...you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength (Dt 6:5). In today’s Gospel, one of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him which is the first of all the commandments? Jesus tells him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mk 12:30). And because, through Jesus, God is one of us, we love Him by loving each other. This is the fulfillment of God’s final and perfect Covenant, the one true Commandment, love as God loves.

We exist because God loves us. He loves us perfectly. If He did not love us, we would cease to exist. We exist only because God is continually and constantly loving us, thinking about us, being with us. And He is with us in no greater way than in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the bread come down from heaven, His only Begotten Son, soon to become really and truly present on this altar. And we are with Him in no greater way than when we receive Him, worthily and in love, heaven on earth. And we can be with Him into eternity by remaining with Him in His love, by loving Him and loving one another.