

October 29, 2023

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ex 22:20-26 | 1 Thes 1:5c-10 | Mt 22:34-40

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Sometimes I stop paying attention to the news for a period of time. There seems to be little that's "new" in the daily barrage of natural disasters and the countless ways we humans hurt each other. I've even stopped using social media, which at least made me smile when seeing photos of friends and family welcoming little ones or celebrating big milestones. Which brings me to today's Gospel: Sometimes it seems overwhelming to want to love as Christ commands, and I feel that there's little, if anything, I can do for people outside of my social circle, let alone on the opposite side of the world. Hearing of my struggles with compassion fatigue, a friend recently reminded me of some wise words that have been attributed to St. Mother Teresa: "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you." We love as Christ commands by willing the good of the other. And it is not trite or cliché to say at times, "honestly, all I can do right now is pray." After all, as the Lord says, "If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate." When our compassion is exhausted, let the Lord carry it, for he never tires. And then, when it is possible, practical, and seems to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can do more - whatever that may be.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

If you're like me and somewhat daunted by the second greatest commandment, I encourage you to take another look at today's readings. "You shall love your *neighbor...*" (emphasis added). Surely the world is far too large for us to make a difference? Therefore, remember that "God so loved the world" - and what he asks of us is to love our *neighbor*. So leave the world to God; pray for and give alms for those bigger world issues when we're able. When our circumstances change and we have more time and energy to take on more, such as participate in ministry, even better! But until then, when we walk out our front door in the morning, we go forth knowing that we are "imitators ... of the Lord," and that this smaller, much more manageable part of the world is what we are called to tend. Let our most active role in being the body of Christ extend to what is immediate to us - our neighbor and community - because that is where we will have the most influence for Christ in the world.

MEDITATE When you feel overwhelmed with the world, reflect upon today's responsorial psalm: "I love you, Lord, my strength." Let God's love for the world and his strength flow into your heart, and know that you can call on him to help you bear the burden of love.

