

**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA WEYMOUTH**  
**HOMILY FOR THE THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (A)**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

Our Gospel readings for the last four Sundays come from that time in Jesus' life between his entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper - Holy Week.

Jesus has repeatedly criticised the religious leaders and they are trying to get their own back on him. They want to trap him into making a mistake which will enable them to discredit him.

Last Sunday we heard about the tax trap and Jesus reply that we must give to God what belongs to God and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. In today's Gospel the Pharisees are having another go. They are trying to get Jesus to choose one of the Ten Commandments as being more important than the others.

Jesus replied: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind."

He was not avoiding the question – he was pointing out that the Commandments are all about how to love God and other people.

On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the prophets also. The Law of the Lord is a Law of Love.

This helps us to understand what we have to give to God, what belongs to God – all our love, heart, soul, mind.

To some extent we can compare love for people with love for God.

When we send birthday cards to the people we love most we might write "with all my love". When we pray to God we should pray "with all my love."

Jesus reminds us of what this means.

It means to love God "with all your heart."

Nothing and nobody else comes first – we can always make time for the person we love most.

Such love changes our way of life just as it did for the Thessalonians in the second reading.

St. Paul praises them for their break with idolatry and conversion to Christ which has made them an example for others to follow.

All our love means loving "with all your mind."

People who love say that they cannot stop thinking about their loved ones. If we really love God we will not stop thinking about him. We will want reminders of him just as we want photos of our loved ones.

If we really love someone we will want to make them happy. If we really love God we will want to do his will.

As we prayed in our opening prayer: “May we do with loving hearts what you ask of us”

Since God asks us to love his people there is no conflict between loving God and loving people – we love both God and people with the same love.

So far I have been comparing our love for God with our love for people, but when Jesus says we must love God with all your soul” the comparison breaks down. Our souls belong to God alone; not to Caesar or to anyone else. Our souls are God’s unique gift to us, inscribed with our name, to be kept carefully, used as God intended, never to be sold or given away.

Blessed John Henry Newman: There is work to be done that only we as individuals can do. We each have a unique contribution to make to life.

As Fr. Stephen said last week, our conscience is the way by which we recognise what we have to do.

When we follow our consciences faithfully we love God with all our soul. Let us pray that we will use our consciences as God intends to do his will for our neighbour as only we can.

**Rev Geoff Carey**