

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
November 4, 2018
The Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
Deuteronomy 6:2-6 † Hebrews 7:23-28 † Mark 12:28b-34



Reflection by: Sister Ann Marie Rimmer, OP

The Many Faces of Love

A friend of mine worked in a low income senior citizen housing building. A woman, who had lived her life on a trust fund managed by a financial advisor, was told in her seventies that she had very little money left and could no longer live in the style to which she had been accustomed. With the help of a friend she got a small apartment in the senior citizen residence. She was angry, did not want to be there, participated in nothing, and thought those around her were “not of her class.” My friend went about her work, and, whenever she met the woman, she treated her with warmth and respect. When the residents in the building celebrated my friend’s 50th Jubilee, the woman did not attend the party in the recreation room. The next day she walked into the office and said, “I do not believe in God. I do not believe the goodness of people, but I believe in you. You have always treated me with respect even when I did not deserve it.” She turned and left the room. Sometimes love is simple and laid back. It often isn’t “doing a lot” but simply treating each person as one beloved by God.

Mark’s message seems simple. Jesus is approached by a scribe to ask a question. Although often the questions of the scribes and Pharisees were meant to trip Jesus up, he receives the scribe with warmth and sincerity, not stereotyping him. The scribe asks, “Of all the 613 laws prescribed to us, which is the first of these commandments?” Jesus, well steeped in Jewish law, draws from Deuteronomy and responds, “To love God and to love your neighbor as you love yourself is worth more than burnt offerings and sacrifice.” The scribe responds, “Well said, Teacher, you are right.” And Jesus saw that the scribe understood.

As Hebrews reminds us with this dialogue, Jesus becomes the perfect priest, the transition from the Old Law to the New. He brought us to a new level of consciousness. He has no need as the high priests did to offer daily sacrifice for he was sinless and he made the ultimate sacrifice for us once and for all.

We are called to love. Love is foundational to the human spirit. What if we could fall madly in love with God? What if we could see the other with God’s eyes? What if we could see ourselves with all our inadequacies as beloved by God, just the way we are? Perhaps we need to love ourselves first.

“Dear God, help me to know the truth about myself, no matter how beautiful it is.”

Macrina Wiederkeh, osb