

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 29, 2017  
Fr. Rick Lorenz

## Reflection

This past week, the priests of Ottawa went on retreat. Bishop Christian spoke to us about the need to be evangelized through the kerygma. This way we can preach with authority, and with authenticity as witnesses. I had heard the word kerygma before, but never quite knew what it meant. The kerygma is the proclamation of the Gospel. It has five parts.

First, (1) **God is love**. This is the foundation of the good news. Because he is love, he brought his people out of slavery in Egypt. He raised them from slavery to freedom. The first part of the Ten Commandments reminds us of this liberation: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery (Dt 5:6, 2061)." Slavery didn't end in 1865. It remains rampant. We're subjugated by our disordered desires; the idols we enshrine to wealth and status; symbols of freedom that snare us in nets.

God is love, but (2) **sin is the problem**. Sin separates us from God and neighbour. It's found in the conflict between men and women, and is the root of our failure to care for the earth. Sin digs a trench within our souls, dividing our hearts between the truth that we know and the lies we accept. To make our obligations clear, God revealed law. The first reading lists some laws concerning resident aliens, widows and orphans, the poor.

Ex 22:20-26  
Ps 18  
1 Thes 1:5-10  
Mt 22:34-40

"You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." God reminds us of our identity, our equality before him, created in his image and likeness; fallen but loved; a truth that is easily seen but quickly forgotten; the sunset's last flash before twilight purples to black.

Sin is the problem, but (3) **Jesus is the answer**. The Ten Commandments were words written on stone by the finger of God. But Jesus is the eternal word, through whom all things came to be; life and light; "the light shines in the darkness, and darkness has not overcome it (Jn 1:5)." In today's Gospel, the Pharisees tested him with a question: "Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?" Jesus answered with two: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the centerpiece of Jewish prayer. And then he adds, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." This commandment is nestled within Leviticus. And they shed light on each other. Loving God leads to loving his creation, with man at the summit. Honouring a person honours his creator, who is God (2069). The twinned commandments reflect the structure of the Ten Commandments: love of God in three commandments on the first tablet, and love of neighbour in seven commandments on the second.

The tablets of testimony were placed in the ark, but the fullness of God's revelation was given in his son. He is the answer to the deepest question of humanity: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light (GS 22)."

Jesus is the answer, so (4) **accept salvation**. Open your heart to receive the gift that is offered. It's a serious business with grave consequences; not just for yourself but for those whom you encounter. Paul points out that the Thessalonians reading his letter followed his example. They imitated him, and this impacted others. "You received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia."

Accept salvation, and (5) **live new life**. We're made into a new creation at baptism, but also by each choice that turns and twists towards God or away. We belong to God who loves us, and we respond to his love through our moral existence. Our sins are our own. But "when we keep his commandments, the Saviour himself comes to love, in us, his Father and his brethren; our Father and our brethren (2074)." When we follow his will, God within loves God without.

The kerygma is the key to the new evangelization, helping the baptized to become disciples on a mission. For this Eucharist let us remember that 1. **God is love**, 2. **sin is the problem**, and 3. **Jesus is the answer**; so 4. **accept salvation**, and 5. **live new life**.