

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew (Matthew 22:36-40)**

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reflection ~ Love Jesus then you will find it easier to love others.**

**In God’s beautiful world everything has an order, a pattern.** Our God is a God of order and beauty, not of chaos, confusion or disorder. We observe this simple truth from the biggest of God’s creation to the smallest. Our planet earth revolves orderly round the sun, the petals of a flower are arranged intricately on the flower stalk, the atoms of a molecule are arranged in a specific, orderly way to make up the molecular structure. It is the same with love. To sum up all the commandments, God gives us two commandments: love God first above all else with everything we have, then love others as much as we love ourselves. They are simple commands. The first one takes precedence over the second. It is the first that gives power to the second.

**God commands us to love Him above everything else with everything we have.** Our God is a jealous God. However, God has every justification in putting before us the commandment to love Him first. First and foremost, God does it out of love for us as our Heavenly Father. This is the true path we must walk in order to reach Him in eternity. No matter what we do, we cannot add glory to God. We can only return to Him the glory that is already His. God does not need our love but having the heart of a father, God deeply desires the salvation of all His children and to be loved by them as He loved them. Anyone who has been a parent will find this easy to understand. Subordinating love for God to another lesser love for an earthly thing or creature of God violates God’s commandments of love. The divine order of love is thrown into disarray. Error, confusion and sin are the result.

**Based on the divine order of love, God commands us to love even our enemies.** Jesus said: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you (Luke 6:27-28)*. To the detractors and unbelievers of our faith, Jesus’ teachings such as this is ridiculous. They do not understand the power of grace working in those who love God. Indeed, there is no force or power apart from the love for God that is unrivalled in its ability to alter attitudes and mindset, modify behavior and bring about the highest potential the Creator has placed in each person. Yes, we are placed on earth to learn how to love like our Heavenly Father so as to be made ready for our true home in heaven. It is love that made us, it is love that will guide us to our true home.

**The disciples of Jesus love Him and accepted His teachings.** *If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them (Luke 6:29)*. None of Jesus’ disciples made a murmur when Jesus taught them this. They knew in their heart, they can do whatever Jesus asked of them for His sake. They were even willing to die for Jesus. The Apostles were martyrs except St John. It was Jesus who set the example of how to love. *Jesus said: Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. (John 15:13)*. Through His life of suffering and sacrifice, Jesus teaches us the way to walk to eternal joy.

### **Conversation with Jesus**

Precious Lord, You created my heart to share Your love. Love is my origin, my destination and the road on which I must walk. You yearn for a return of Your love from my heart. You deeply desire that I love You as You love me. You want me to share this love with others as You said: whatever you do to the least of my brethren you do to Me. True love for God translates into true love for others. Purify my heart and fill it with Your holy and divine love so that I may feel Your love and grow in my love for You. Then, give me a great desire to please You and to grow closer to You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, teach me to love Jesus as You do. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.