



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
November 3, 2024

Take to Heart These Words

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

“**H**ear, O Israel!” (Deuteronomy 6:4) are the first words of the most important declaration of faith for Jewish people, a declaration that is the centerpiece of the morning and evening Jewish prayer services. It is a kind of “pledge of allegiance” that observant Jews say even today, reminding themselves of the uniqueness of their God and the covenantal relationship they have with this God. In it, they confess that the Lord is their God—their only God. Out of reverence, they do not pronounce God’s personal name. In its

place, they substitute the word Lord. Behind this act of faith is the covenantal promise of God: “I will be your God and you shall be my people” (Jeremiah 7:23).

This covenant carries mutual responsibilities. God will be their God and will be faithful to all that this blessing entails. As God’s people, they will live according to the standards established by God, witnessing to the world the holiness in life lived for and with God. They are to love God with all their hearts, souls, and strength.

Jesus did not change this declaration in any way. It is at the heart of the Christian way of life as well. What Jesus did was throw light on the meaning of living for and with God, of loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. He insists that to love God is to love others, and to love them as we love ourselves. “Hear, O Israel!...

Take to heart these words” (Deuteronomy 6:4, 6). †



God’s people will live according to the standards established by God, witnessing to the world the holiness in life lived for and with God.

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 6:2–6

Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe [the commandments,] that you may grow and prosper the more.

Hebrews 7:23–28

Jesus, because he remains forever, has a priesthood that does not pass away.

Mark 12:28b–34

[The scribe said to Jesus,] “‘To love your neighbor as yourself’ is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

A Word from Pope Francis

God, who is Love, created us to love and so that we can love others while remaining united with him. It would be misleading to claim to love our neighbor without loving God; it would also be deceptive to claim to love God without loving our neighbor. The two dimensions of love, for God and for neighbor, in their unity characterize the disciple of Christ.

ANGELUS, ROME, NOVEMBER 4, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you believe that God wants you to love everyone you meet?
- How can you love those you find difficult?



Love the Baby, Love the Man

Mitch and Kathy Finley

Advent, (which begins in four weeks) is, in part, about waiting and preparing for a baby. Christians love the stories and the images of this baby, born in a place for animals, lying in a manger, the sweet hay breath of cattle and sheep filling the air—not to mention some less pleasant aromas, courtesy of the same bovine and woolly creatures. But the expected baby will not remain a rosy-cheeked plastic figure in a manger scene. Babies become toddlers with opinions, teenagers with even more opinions, young adults who move on with their lives...or not. When we love a baby, we love all that the baby will become, even that which is not so easy to love.

This baby, who will be known as the Son of God, will grow to be the wise and gentle teacher of the gospel. He will beckon us to pay attention to his example. He is poor; he relies on God alone. His message is for all the earth, not just “the chosen.” A cross will be involved. And, with that cross, the promise of resurrection.

The wood of the manger is the wood of the cross. To love this baby is to love his people—all of them—and sometimes to accept the suffering that loving others brings. Saint John defines God as Love and writes about him: “No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us” (1 John 4:12). Jesus’ commandment to love God and love our neighbor echoes in our hearts. If we can obey this most important commandment, then we are promised “peace...like a river” (Isaiah 48:18). †

This reflection is an excerpt from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas* by Mitch and Kathy Finley, published by Liguori Publications (828607). Advent begins in four weeks. Visit Liguori.org for *Daybreaks* and other spiritual reading for the season.

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “In the Words of Henri Nouwen: How to Live a Happier, More Fulfilled Life”

If you are lonely or grieving, live in compassionate community. To follow Christ means to relate to each other with the mind of Christ; that is, to relate to each other as Christ did to us—in servanthood and humility. Jesus didn’t live alone. There were the Twelve and the other disciples. They formed circles of intimacy around Jesus. Where are you getting your affection? Who’s touching you? Who’s holding you? Who makes you feel alive? Who says, “You are a beautiful person, you are the beloved of God, don’t forget it”?

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. To learn more, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.



Loving God, help me to do my part in making this world a gentler, kinder, safer place for everyone I meet. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 4–9

Monday, St. Charles Borromeo:

Phil 2:1–4 / Lk 14:12–14

Tuesday, Weekday:

Phil 2:5–11 / Lk 14:15–24

Wednesday, Weekday:

Phil 2:12–18 / Lk 14:25–33

Thursday, Weekday:

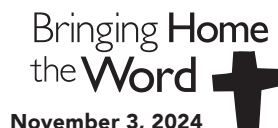
Phil 3:3–8a / Lk 15:1–10

Friday, Weekday:

Phil 3:17–4:1 / Lk 16:1–8

Saturday, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica:

Ez 47:1–2, 8–9, 12 / 1 Cor 3:9c–11, 16–17 / Jn 2:13–22



November 3, 2024

© 2024 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2024 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.