

31st Sunday of Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Ps 18:2-4, 47, 51
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 12:28b-34

Monday November 1 All Saints Day

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14
Ps 24:1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12a

Tuesday November 2 All Souls Day

Wisdom 3:1-9
Romans 5:5-11
or Romans 6:3-9
John 6:37-40

Wednesday November 3

Romans 13:8-10
Ps 112:1b-2, 4-5, 9
Luke 14:25-33

Thursday November 4 St. Charles Borromeo

Romans 14:7-12
Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14
Luke 15:1-10

Friday November 5

Romans 15:14-21
Ps 98:1-4
Luke 16:1-8

Saturday November 6

Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27
Ps 145:2-5, 10-11
Luke 16:9-15

In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus asserted the two greatest commands of the Law, quoting from the ancient Hebrew scriptures, which we have in the first reading. And the second reading, from the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, explains how the Law of Love supersedes or fulfills all other laws. Jesus, who loved perfectly and never sinned against anyone, sacrificed himself for sinners. Therefore, we who want to follow him to heaven need to follow in his footsteps of love, by loving God and everyone else whole-heartedly.

Try as we might, though, we love imperfectly; we sin. The best penance, then, is an act of love, especially if it's a sacrifice offered to (or for) those who were harmed by our sin. But the damage we've caused has a ripple effect that goes far beyond anything we can see. This is remedied in the Catholic Church's Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus -- through the priest -- ac-

cepts our remorse and absolves our sins, while the entire earthly Body of Christ (the Church) -- through the priest -- accepts our penances for the earthly damage that our sins have caused.

Penance is not only an act of love, it's designed to strengthen our resolve to choose love when tempted to sin again. If the priest gives us an easy penance (for

example, "Say the Lord's Prayer and three Hail Marys"), if we really want to become holier, we should ask God



during those three Hail Marys for a penance that's a more difficult act of love. We should choose a sacrifice, something that requires loving God with our whole heart, soul, and mind as well as loving ourselves and our neighbors just as much.

Saint Anthony Mary Claret said, "The love of Christ arouses us, urges us to run, and to fly, lifted on the wings of holy zeal." How high is your love flying? Zeal is a good measuring instrument of how much we love God.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Whom have you loved imperfectly this week?
2. What act of penance could you do that would be an exercise in loving them better, treating them the way Jesus would? When will you complete the reconciliation through the sacraments of the Church?
3. What does "zeal" mean? Name some of the ways that we love God with zeal.
4. Tell the story of a time when you made a sacrifice because of love. How did this reveal Jesus to others?