

Reflection Sunday 25th October

Matthew 22: 34-46 The Greatest Commandment

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, ' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

Love is so easy isn't it?

"All you need is love," said the Beatles.

Loving ourselves can be a big issue for many, as we tend to see the negative about ourselves; we see our failings more than our positives, mistakes more than successes. We look at ourselves in the mirror and do not always like what we see.

Body image can be a really big issue for many people with so many products on the TV, and in newspapers and magazines, encouraging us to buy a new product that will hide the wrinkles, colour the hair, hold in that bit of body that sticks out where we rather it didn't and so much more.

If we are to care for all that God created, as stewards of creation, it does mean that we should look after ourselves and many of us may not have been as careful with that as perhaps we should have been but pulling ourselves apart over it is not loving ourselves in the now.

Loving ourselves includes enjoying life so the denial of all "pleasure" is not a good thing. Eating more healthily and getting exercise is part of caring for self but to always turn down that food that we enjoy may not be the answer.

I will leave the physical at this point and allow you to reflect briefly upon your own situation of caring for yourself in creation.

The spiritual in each of us also needs caring for. At times we can feast on the spiritual and other times we can fast. Neither is the best way.

When I was in my early 20's I would be at "church" events 4 or 5 evenings a week in prayers meetings and fellowship groups and then of course the odd Church Council type meeting. I was an out and out Christian – I was out every at a Christian events all the time.

What is wrong with that? I was in a healthy environment; the other side though was a lack of contact with people outside the Christian Circle. I was expressing my love for God but not having time to love neighbours to have friends outside the Christian Community to share my faith with.

I was in feast mode!

Fast mode is the other extreme and in these last few months it has been an easy option to fall into; not even the once a week Sunday "dining" of an hour in Church was on the table. Having a balanced Spiritual diet is not easy at the best of times but in the worst of times it is far more of a problem. As we approach the season of Advent beginning on 29th November, it could be a time to look at our spiritual diet. Are we eating at all? Is it healthy dining? Is it an expression of loving God and myself?

If I love myself through caring for my whole self, physically, mentally and spiritually I will be better able to love God and my neighbour. And remember the word of Isaiah, "Come, all who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come buy and eat?" (Isa 55:1) With Christ there is always food and drink on the table – reach out and taste and see that the Lord is good.

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