

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Sunday, October 31, 2021  
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Cycle B

My friend came one day to introduce me to his future bride and asked me to prepare them for their wedding. After the interview, and looking at them both, I once again marveled at the beauty of love freely given, freely bestowed, certainly a gift. Every day it is possible to be surprised by many acts of love.

If the essence of love is that of its liberty, its freedom, then why did God command us to love? Why did the Lord Jesus affirm this commandment and simplify the love of God and neighbor into one? Does God get anything out of our love?

We can be sure of this, that love does not benefit God in himself. As one of the prayers at mass states: "You have no need of our praise yet our desire to thank you is itself your gift. Our prayer of thanksgiving adds nothing to your greatness but makes us grow in your love through Jesus Christ our Lord." Because God is love, perfect love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we can also say: "You have no need of our love...." The Trinity is a perfect community of love.

We love God as an expression of our gratitude. Looking around us, we find so many things to give thanks for – life, health, family, courage in the face of trials, peace of mind and heart. When we say "thank you," we implicitly say "I love you." People who are most appreciative of their blessings are people who spontaneously and consistently give thanks. They give love and accept love from God and others. But people who only focus on their complaints, on their miseries and regrets, cannot see the love they can give and the love that is offered before their eyes.

To love God, to be grateful to him, is not the end but the beginning of a journey. The Lord Jesus fulfilled this commandment by finding its direct link with the other face of love – Love of neighbor. For Jesus, love of God, though it is excellent in itself, is not enough to feel satisfied. Love of God must naturally flow into love of others, otherwise, it is not authentic and

lasting. How can you say that you love God and yet ignore, hate, or be indifferent to your neighbor?

It is only by loving God and neighbor that we can say with pride that we have truly loved. Let us pray for the grace to love as Jesus desires us to do.

Lord, teach us to love the way You want us to love – selflessly, sacrificially, generously – that is the way You love.

Teach us to give others what we would love for ourselves; to gift others what we would love to receive; to share with others not our waste but our best; to love others in ways we yearn to be loved.

Amen