



Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal



Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? This

is the theme for our readings today. All of us want to know what we must do for eternal life. The way in which we ask

the question is probably more important than the answer. If I am looking only for the things that I must do, my question will take me to a dead end. If I am asking how to follow the Teacher, the Lord Jesus, then all shall be well. We should all be attentive to the difference in the way we ask questions! The first way of asking this question could result in a handbook of the various things that I must do. The second way of asking the question has only a vague answer that must be lived concretely each day: Love God and love your neighbor!

The first reading today is from the Book of Deuteronomy and is very similar to today's Gospel: heed the voice of the Lord and keep His commandments and statutes. Sure, there is something a bit more concrete in this advice than that of the Gospel, but it implies an ongoing listening to the voice of the Lord—and that is the same as loving God and neighbor. God's message to us, His people, has been consistent throughout all ages: listen to His voice, love Him and others, follow Him in every moment of life.

The second reading, from the Letter of the Colossians, again contains this same type of teaching, but is now specific that God is in Jesus and it is Jesus, our Teacher, that we must follow, and He is the head of the Church and so we must belong in the Church. Jesus is God and Jesus is encountered now in His Church. So many today would like to say: I love Jesus but I don't like the Church. This kind of thinking has no place in us who follow the Teacher, the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the head of the Church and the Spirit guides the Church. Jesus and the Spirit show us the Father in His Church.

The whole focus of Luke's Gospel today is on the story of **the Good Samaritan**. Clearly we are called to love our neighbor. This is the direct teaching of Jesus. And who is my neighbor: everyone who comes into my life in any way. My neighbor is every person I treat with mercy for love of the Lord Jesus, my Teacher. My neighbor is each person who needs my help or asks my help or who enters my life in any way. We can see quickly that this answer makes us leave aside any book of good deeds that I must do and instead I must serve each person according to that person's needs. An incredible commandment! It demands everything of us, just as it demanded everything of Jesus, even unto death.

My sisters and brothers, we are invited to walk the way of the Teacher, the Lord Jesus, and serve all others and to give our lives up completely in the love of others. Let us walk in the way of the Lord!

Have a Blessed Sunday!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

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