

Pentecost 20, 26/10/2014, Holy Trinity

Matthew 22:34-46

With the reading of this morning's Gospel it is a case of here we go again.

The disagreement between Jesus and the Jewish authorities continues.

This time the Pharisees try to stump Jesus as they pose the question "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest"?

This argument was current in the Jewish community of the time.

From the first five books of the Old Testament the religious authorities had worked out that there were 613 commandments to keep (and I thought the 10 Commandments were hard enough to keep without looking at over 600 more).

The sect of the Pharisees was elitist and they argued that all 613 had to be kept and that no one of them was more important than any other.

On the other hand, the average "joe blow", who worked from daylight to dark and had no hope of obeying all 613, wanted to know which were the most important so that he/she, at least, may have some chance of obeying the most important.

Hence, we have the question to Jesus in an attempt to 'catch him out' and to give them ammunition in their attempts to charge him with blasphemy.

In his answer Jesus recites from Deuteronomy that basically tells us that we are to love God with all that we are.

But to Jesus this is only half the answer.

Jesus tells them that loving God is the greatest commandment, but that loving neighbours is a close second.

Jesus tells us that all the other commandments are footnotes to the other two: to love God with all that we are and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

We all know that our neighbour is a great deal more than those who live in the homes that are next to ours.

This is a good spot to say a few words about love in this context.

Love, in this context is not so much a feeling as it is an action.

Love here is not so much a warm, fuzzy and nice feeling about someone.

It is about how we treat those people about whom we do not have a warm, fuzzy and nice feeling.

It is not about feelings: it is about actions: how we act towards God and how we act towards our neighbour in the fullest sense of that word.

Well, then, how do we go about loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind?

What we do here every Sunday and at other times during the week is an act of love.

When we come together to study the Scriptures or to listen what God is saying to us in the Sacred Reading of Scripture is an act of love.

When we come together to pray, to sing God's praises is an act of love.

When we support one another in terms of joy and sorrow and when we talk with and help and support others who "drive us up the wall" and whom we meet here and elsewhere we are loving God and our neighbour.

Within this community of faith each one of us has a story to tell of how we love God and our neighbour as ourselves.

Each one of us is an integral part of this community of faith and has a part to play in our action of loving God and our neighbour.

Together we strive to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind and together we experience the joy of serving God in our love for one another.

This is our calling within each of the communities from family, workplace, club and the general community in which we live day by day.

It is our call to action to love God and our neighbour.

What part of that love needs the most work by you at this time?

You cannot do this on your own.

You need God's grace and you need one another.