

The Fifteen Sunday after Pentecost
Matthew 22:35-46

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions. (KJV)

Jesus is very clear in the present Gospel about loving God with all the heart, mind and soul. The believer is dedicated to the Lord fully at Baptism. The remaining days of earthly life are to be lived in God-pleasing ways.

God knows the contents of the heart mind and soul. If love of God fills the heart, mind and soul, this love will be evident in daily relationships and actions. The fruits of a person's life will reveal the extent God is loved.

God's Holy Church nourishes the believer's love of God. The Church guides the believer through the journey of life from the Baptismal font to departure from his life.

Developing and maintaining full of love God requires making conscious decisions. The heart, mind and soul must value and seek God for the believer to love God completely.

Love of God is inseparable with love of neighbor. The First Epistle of St. John States: "And this commandment have we from him, That he who **loveth** God **love** his **brother** also." (1 John 4:21)

Honest self-examination will reveal if we love God completely with our heart, mind and soul. A similar self-examination will determine the degree we love the people that are part of our daily lives.

The effort we put forth in life to grow in Christ can lead to an increase in love of God and in love of neighbor. Seeking to grow in Christ and to have greater love in our heart, mind and soul requires significant effort.

A willingness to make conscious decisions to follow Christ's teachings is necessary to grow in love for Christ and for the people in our daily lives. Opening our heart, mind and soul for Christ to fully enter and be welcomed is necessary.

Recognizing personal sinfulness and a willingness to repent facilitates growth in Christ. Being open and acknowledging Christ's love fosters love for Christ and love for others.

Being fervent in Christ in prayer will bring change in the way daily life is lived. Seeking Christ's help in daily relationships to improve will bring eventual progress.

Today's Gospel originates from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel has lasting value. The degree that the Gospel leads to change in each believer's life is determined by the personal action taken.

Believers desiring to grow in Christ will pray for an increase in love for God in the heart, mind and soul. Believers wanting to please God will pray fervently for God's help in improving daily personal relationships.

Life's journey is relatively long. Living to seventy or eighty years is mentioned in the Psalms. (Ps 89/90:10) Growth in Christ throughout life is expected. Maturing in Christ is an expectation for believers.

The Church provides the environment for continuous learning and growth. The Church provides the opportunity for complete unity with Christ and neighbor. God's help is necessary for the growth. God is always present to provide the help.

The journey from the Baptismal font to departure from this life is intended to occur in and with the Church. Believers do not journey alone. Believers benefit from the prayers and participation of others in the Church.

Believers' prayers are intended to benefit others as well as the self. Unity with Christ and with others in Christian love is expected. Looking to God for direction in prayer will reveal the paths to follow and the decisions to make.

Life unfolds at each moment. God is ever-present to help the believer to understand the unfolding and to guide the believer. Constant prayer keeps the believer united with the Lord God and is reassuring.

God's presence is verifiable throughout the day for believers with eyes to see. God's presence is encouraging to believers to go forward in hope when life is difficult.

The Church brings the Gospel to believers throughout the year and throughout life until the glorious Second Coming. God does not leave believers alone. God is with each believer throughout life.

God is present and offers eternal life. The way daily life is lived determines the outcome when earthly life comes to an end. Love of God and love of neighbor opens the door for life eternal.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Hieromartyr Bablyas. Prophet Moses. Hieromartyr .Peter of Dabar-Bosnia. September 4/17, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic