

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 25, 2020

“you were once aliens yourselves
in the land of Egypt.”

– Exodus 22:20

Right after God proclaims the Ten Commandments to Moses in the Book of Exodus, there's a cascade of other rules, norms and dictums listed that ballooned to a grand total of 613 laws that regulated the social, communal and religious life of the Hebrew people. Among these rules was the prescription not to oppress the alien or stranger who lived among them and a reminder that they were once strangers in a strange land, therefore, they should know how that feels. It's a call for empathy and for recognizing the worth and dignity of the newcomer in their midst. It's a demand that all be compassionate and just in the manner that God is. This is a powerful message for our time, communally, nationally and worldwide.

In our Gospel selection this weekend, Jesus is asked which of those 613 laws is the most important, and he comes up with the prime rule – love God with your whole being (Deuteronomy 6:5). But then he quickly adds a corollary by quoting Leviticus 19:18: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” For Matthew's Jesus, love of God and neighbor as self are the interpretive key to what the “reign of heaven” is like. Sound easy? *Au contraire*.

During Jesus' historical ministry and in many branches of Judaism today, everyone was expected to greet the sunrise by praying the *Shema*. Taken from Deuteronomy 6, the prayer begins, “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

In one of Judaism's most treasured stories, the famous 1st century teacher Hillel responded to a gentile's taunt to teach him the entire Torah in the time it took him to stand on one foot. Hillel responded: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.

That is the whole Torah; the rest is explanation; go and learn.” Love of others is a constant for anyone who enters a relationship with God.

To fully understand our Gospel reading, a quick review of Judaism 101 would help. The *Shema* remains the centerpiece of the daily morning and evening prayer services and is considered by some the most essential prayer in all of Judaism. An affirmation of God’s singularity and sovereignty, the daily recitation of the *Shema* is regarded by traditionally observant Jews as a biblical commandment.

The first verse of the *Shema*, from Deuteronomy 6:5, is among the best-known in all of Jewish liturgy. It is recited at the climactic moment of the final prayer of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, and traditionally as the last words before death. Traditionally, it is recited with the hand placed over the eyes:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

She-ma yisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai echad

Hear O’ Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

This verse is followed by one line of text that is traditionally recited in an undertone:

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

Baruch shem kavod malchuto l’olam va-ed

Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever

The remainder of the *Shema* prayer is taken from three biblical sources: Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Deuteronomy 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41.

The first verse of the *Shema* is considered the most essential declaration of the Jewish faith — the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. The passage that follows details the particular ways in which that faith should be lived: Love God with all of your being, teach it to your children, recite it when you wake and lie down, bind it as a symbol on your body.

As a reminder of the centrality of God in one’s life, a Mezuzah is placed on every doorway in an observant Jewish household. The little case contains a scroll with the first verse of the *Shema* inside: “the Lord is our God, the Lord is one” and the backside of the case has one

of the Hebrew names of God inscribed on the back: *Sha-dai* which also means "Guardian of the doorways of Israel".

These Mezuzahs on the doorjamb are a constant reminder of how on the eve of their liberation from Pharaoh's Egypt they smeared blood of the lamb on their doorposts to ward off the Angel of Death. Thus, God's reminder in our passage from Exodus 22 that they were once aliens and sojourners should not come as a surprise; they should know how disorienting and vulnerable they felt. God also calls for empathy for the poor, and care for widows and orphans – indeed all the neglected and marginalized.

Our Exodus selection today is from the Covenant Code or the Book of the Covenant, (Exodus 20:22-23:33), immediately following the Exodus account of the Ten Commandments, (20:1-21). This law code is set within the covenant relationship framework which God established with the people through Moses on Mt. Sinai. Aliens, widows and orphans were usually powerless and poor, relying upon the goodness and compassion of others.

Aware of such disparity and powerlessness among community members, God's will and laws demand justice and right relationship. God, attuned to the needs of the poor and powerless, promises to respond when they cry out in their need. God also says that those who do not reach out in compassion and justice towards others are in for trouble.

One example of offering compassion and justice was in making loans. Loans were made not to take advantage of the other but to alleviate economic distress by not charging interest on loans. That meant not taking the cloak or outer garment used by the poor as a sleeping blanket during the cold of the evening. Amos, the strong prophet of justice, excoriates the rich for sleeping upon garments taken in pledge from the poor (2:8).

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Prelude: Sing along with “Lord Lift Me Up” presented by Bishop Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Tabernacle Church Choir featuring Elder Kervy Brown:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlqo6h3b3Ak>

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you show us the living face of a compassionate God:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you show us how to love God with all our being:
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you show us how to love our neighbors as ourselves:
Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

Your love, O God, is boundless.
We who were strangers have been made your children.
We who were defenseless have been brought into your household.
Keep us mindful of your deeds of mercy,
that we may love you with our whole heart
and love our neighbor as ourselves.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

Let the church say – Amen.

Listen to “Get Your House In Order” with Dottie Peoples & the Peoples Choice Chorale:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1IDp0vDA8w>

Then move into reading today’s Scriptures.

**Readings for 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 25 2020**

1st Reading – Exodus 22:20-26

Thus says the LORD:^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]20 “You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.

21 You shall not wrong any widow or orphan.²² If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry.

23 My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans.

24 “If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. 25 If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset;²⁶ for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate.”

The Word of the Lord...Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm – 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

R. I love you, Lord, my strength.

2 I love you, O LORD, my strength,^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

3^{AB} O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

R. I love you, Lord, my strength.

3^{CD} My God, my rock of refuge,^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP] my shield,
the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

4 Praised be the LORD, I exclaim,^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

and I am safe from my enemies.^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

R. I love you, Lord, my strength.

47 The LORD lives and blessed be my rock!^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

Extolled be God my savior.^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

51 You who gave great victories to your king^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]
and showed kindness to your anointed.^[L]^[SEP]^[L]^[SEP]

R. I love you, Lord, my strength.

2nd Reading – 1 Thessalonians 1:5C-10

Brothers and sisters:^{5C} You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake.

⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit,⁷ so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

⁹ For they themselves openly declare about us what sort of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ¹⁰ and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Gospel – Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together,

³⁵ and one of them, a scholar of the law tested him by asking,

³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”

³⁷ He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

³⁸ This is the greatest and the first commandment.

³⁹ The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

The Gospel of the Lord....Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

First, sing along with “I Know I’ve Been Changed” by LaShun Pace:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOeZ4ebDdu8>

- In our Exodus reading today, God reminds us that we or our ancestors too were strangers once. How does this demand of God apply in our world – to our attitudes toward immigrants and refugees?
- How can we reach out to these newcomers and be welcoming?

- Are there ways Lourdes could respond with acclimation classes, mentoring, or advocacy?
- In what moments in your life have you experienced God’s love for you?
- Do you know someone who really practices the commandment of love of neighbor?

Meditation Prompts:

In honor of this Month of Mary, first, listen to the Schubert “Ave Maria” presented by Jessye Norman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=do5ZmQQM8AE>

- Move into silence and breathe in the power of the Spirit to enable you to do what love asks of you.
- Jewish households affix to all the major doors a Mezuzah with a little scroll written with the commandment to love God from Deuteronomy 6:5. If you were to put a line from the New Testament in a little container at each of your doors, what would it say? – “God is love” or “Love your enemy” or “Jesus remember me” “Jesus, take pity on me.” There are many possibilities. What’s yours?

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – October 25, 2020
THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Presider: Let us pray now for our neighbors here and across the world, whom we are commanded to love.

Worship Leader

1. For Pope Francis and his call for us to reach out to the abandoned and the exploited. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
(ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**)
2. For our pre-election Novena to St. Martin de Porres, which begins tomorrow, that we will be changed by our prayer and prepared for whatever comes. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
3. For the aliens and widowed, the orphaned and poor of today’s world who need our love. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**

4. For peacemakers and for all who live in the path of war or violence. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
5. For the 545 children lost in our immigration system to be reunited with their families. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
6. For scientists and public health officials to be successful in devising vaccines and medications to combat the novel corona virus. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
7. For our Stephen Ministry, its leaders, and all Care Team members and receivers here at Lourdes. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
8. For all those who are unemployed or underpaid, that they find the work they seek with a living wage and humane benefits. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
9. For commitments and actions to renew the face of the Earth for future generations. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Angela and Anthony Lucas, Henry Murray Stephen Claxton and Camilla Roberson for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**
12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear the cries of the poor, O God.**

Presider: God of justice, you have spoken clearly regarding our responsibility to love not only you, but also our neighbors. You have called us especially to love and serve those who are most vulnerable. Help us to love as Jesus loved. We pray in his name. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Sing or recite “The Lord’s Prayer.” Then, join in with “Jesus I’ll Never Forget What You Done for Me” featuring Bishop G.E. Patterson leading old fashioned congregational singing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY41lss09I0>

Closing Prayer

God of holiness, increase within us
your gifts of faith, hope, and love,
and enable us to cherish whatever you command,
that we may come to possess all that you promise.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN.

Closing Hymn

Sing along with “How Excellent Is Thy Name” sung by the Mississippi Mass Choir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W17-4LDYH74>