

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • July 13, 2025

*O God,
you shower us
with mercy and kindness
beyond measure.
Plant your holy Word
deep in our hearts.
Inscribe your
Law of Love within us.
Make of us
a parable of goodness,
proclaiming your generosity
to all the world.*



Sunday Word

Deuteronomy 30:10-14
Psalm 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37
Colossians 1:15-20
Luke 10:25-37

Heart and Soul

Moses urges the people to embrace God's Commandments and statutes with their whole heart and soul. The book of the Law lays out the right path before them. It is not hard to understand, remote, or inscrutable. God's love is clear and near to them, something already before their very eyes.

Image and Firstborn

Saint Paul sings a hymn in praise of Christ, for in the Lord Jesus, we see the love of God made visible. Through Christ all things hold together. He is the firstborn of all creation, the fullness of God's reconciling, merciful grace.

Doing and Loving

Love is a matter of doing, not a mere profession, never just a claim. To love God with our whole heart, being, strength, and mind is to be centered in God and God's love. We become proficient in love by pouring out the love we have received, by loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Church Teaching: Love of Neighbor

Love Fulfills the Law

Jesus preached to the crowds that he did not come to abolish the Mosaic Law but to fulfill it (see Matthew 5:17). The Son of God—in his life, ministry, teaching, and Paschal Mystery—came among us and brought to completion, or fruition, the Law of God, fulfilling its purpose by his own mission. He shows the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the letter of the Law. He shows to us the overwhelming power of God's amazing love by giving his life for us.

The Great Commandment

Although Jesus was not unique in summing up all the Commandments into one, the Great Commandment that he preaches is significant because he combines the two injunctions

in such a powerful way, and he shows us how to love by his own example. The Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) must be interpreted in the light of this single Commandment of Jesus. Jesus proclaims that all of the Law and the prophets as well hang on this twofold, yet single command to love.

Christ's love for us is the inspiration for all the outreach of Christians to our neighbors. As Saint Paul wrote, "The love of Christ urges us on" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The life-changing awareness that, in Christ, God has given himself for us, even unto death on a Cross, inspires us to live no longer for ourselves but for him and—with him—for others. Divine love urges us as individual members and as an entire Church to be the image and instrument of every charitable, merciful, and kind action for the good of our neighbor.

Works of Mercy

Our Catholic tradition enumerates two categories of charitable works by which we help to meet our neighbor's needs: the Spiritual Works of Mercy and the Corporal Works of Mercy. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are admonishing the sinner, instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving all injuries, and praying for the living and the dead. The Corporal (or bodily) Works of Mercy are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.

These Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy are prime actions that help us realize the love of neighbor that Jesus enjoins upon his followers. These actions, when rendered to another believer, help build up the Body of Christ, the Church. When they are shown to nonbelievers, they give a strong witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Wherever people lack the basic necessities of a truly human life, whenever they are racked by misfortune, illness, suffering, or war, the genuine Christian response is to search them out and help to relieve their needs.

In meeting the needs of our sisters and brothers, our neighbors near and far, we ultimately serve Christ, for when we show charity to the least among us, we show it to Jesus (see Matthew 25:40).

Key Terms

MOSAIC LAW

The Law of Moses, so called because God revealed both the divine name and this Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. This Law is contained in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, along with hundreds of proscriptions and statutes whose foundation are the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:2-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 62).

GREAT COMMANDMENT

Jesus' summary of the entire Law and the Ten Commandments in the command to love God and one's neighbor (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2055).

TEN COMMANDMENTS

Also known as the Decalogue, which literally means "ten words" revealed by God to Moses. Unlike the other Commandments written by Moses, these are preeminently the words of God. The teaching of Jesus guides our interpretation of their meaning (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2056).

Voices of Faith

If you see charity, you see the Trinity.

—Saint Augustine

The unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor is emphasized. One is so closely connected to the other that to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbor or hate him altogether. . . . Love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and . . . closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2054 (the Spirit at work in the Law), 2196 (love fulfills the Law)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 23 (Life in Christ—Part One), especially the section entitled "Love, Rules, and Grace," pages 318–321

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 434 (the person of Jesus realizes perfectly the Law), 435 (Jesus' interpretation of the Law), 436 (Decalogue)