

Homily Summary – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Main Themes:

1. **Loving God and Neighbor: Our Christian Foundation** Jesus teaches us that love for God and neighbor is the very heart of holiness. The call to love God with every part of ourselves—our hearts, minds, souls, and strength—means giving Him our best each day. Moses' call in Deuteronomy, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5), emphasizes this same commitment. Loving our neighbor as ourselves completes this vision, reflecting God's own love through our words, actions, and compassion.
2. **Living the Commandments Daily** Loving God looks like daily prayer, Mass attendance, and the Sacraments—especially Reconciliation, where we find His mercy and are renewed in His grace (CCC 1422). Loving our neighbor means reaching out to those in need, showing forgiveness, and working for justice in our communities. This is where we find true joy and fulfillment, for a life of love unites us more closely with God and others, bringing peace and healing to a divided world.
3. **Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead: A Month of Remembrance** As November begins, the Church invites us to pray for the souls in Purgatory, those in need of purification to enter God's presence. Our Catholic belief in Purgatory is rooted in Scripture, such as in 2 Maccabees 12:46, which speaks of praying for the dead to be "loosed from their sins." St. Isidore of Seville and other saints confirm that the apostles encouraged prayers for the deceased. We, the Church Militant, can pray for the Church Suffering in Purgatory, while the saints, the Church Triumphant, pray for us.
4. **Praying and Growing in Unity with the Communion of Saints** November is a month to remember the "Communion of Saints"—that we are all united in God's love, beyond even death. Our loved ones in Purgatory are still part of our family, still held close in prayer. As we enter this month of remembrance, we're invited to use the Book of Remembrance, where we can write the names of our loved ones and offer Masses and prayers for them. This spiritual connection brings us hope and strengthens our love for those who have gone before us.
5. **Following Mary's Perfect Example** Mary, who loved God with her whole heart, soul, and strength, is our model of holiness. Her life was a total "yes" to God, full of humility, prayer, and love for others. Like Mary, we are called to surrender to God's love and follow Him completely. Her example shows us that when we say "yes" to God, we open our lives to His transformative love, becoming more like Christ.

Reflection Questions:

1. Am I giving my whole heart, mind, and strength to loving God each day?
2. Are there people I need to forgive or show more love toward in my life?
3. How can I use this month to pray for the souls in Purgatory, strengthening our bond with the Communion of Saints?

Rap Summary:

To love with all heart, mind, and soul,
Is God's call that makes us whole.
Purgatory's grace, for saints to be,
As we love in God's eternity.
For neighbor and God, we give all we've got,
With each prayer we say, each sin we fought.
To seek Heaven's glory and live love's call,
With love like Mary, we give God our all.

Takeaway:

Today, we're called to love God and neighbor with our entire being. As we pray for the dead this month, let's remember our journey toward holiness and our connection with the saints, strengthened by God's endless mercy and love.

Reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>