

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

Thursday, January 7, 2021

-- Memorial of St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest

-- Fr. Sherdel's Morning Mass Intention: **Robert Sherdel**



First Reading: 1 John 4:19—5:4

Beloved, we love God because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72:1-2, 14, 15, 17

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
He shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment. ***R/.***

From fraud and violence he shall redeem them,
and precious shall their blood be in his sight.
May they be prayed for continually;
day by day shall they bless him. ***R/.***

May his name be blessed forever;
as long as the sun his name shall remain.
In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;
all the nations shall proclaim his happiness. ***R/.***

Gospel: Luke 4:14-22

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.

Reflection

Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:21)

Obedying God is so simple. You just have to love.

Obedying God is so difficult. You always have to love.

Clearly, the love John is talking about is more than an emotion. It's a decision. No matter how angry, fearful, or hurt you are feeling, you can always choose to act in a way that seeks to promote the good of the person in front of you. You can always choose to value their welfare above what might be easier or more pleasing for you.

Loving someone means going out of your way to greet a stranger and being willing to learn from someone whose experiences are very different from your own. It means readily forgiving someone instead of trying to make them feel guilty. It means celebrating someone's achievement and applauding their effort, even if it takes the spotlight off of you and your accomplishments.

Of course, that's a very tall order. We know how hard it can be to discern the most loving thing to do in the messy circumstances of daily life. We've all experienced love that misses the mark and winds up harming ourselves or someone else. None of us love perfectly.

But don't lose heart! John gives us an essential key to loving: "We love God because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). All love originates from God himself. Remember times when your heart was lifted by going to Mass or seeing a beautiful sunrise. Or when a dear friend called out of the blue and boosted your spirits. These are all signs of God's love reaching out to you. As you make his love the foundation of your life, your ability to extend that love to the people around you grows — especially when you recall that God loves each of them in the very same way that he loves you.

God himself is the source of all love. And you have that source to draw from dwelling within you — the Holy Spirit. So be encouraged: loving is up to you. But it's not all up to you!

Jesus, thank you for loving me. Help me to answer your call to share your love with the people around me.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.