Loving Fully

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells us that the most important commandment is to love fully. Specifically He said *"…You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* And the second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* These two commandments are really one in the same. This summarizes what He desires for us all: that we come into unity with Him. Forever.

The second half of His commandment is the key to the first. He knows that in our day-to-day experiences we are not able to practically show the fullness of our love to an invisible God. Therefore, He has told us to love the other persons He has created. And He told us to love with the fullness of our entire being—our immeasurable soul, our expansive intellect, and our complete physical presence. In attempting to love all others with our entire being, we love God the same. In living this way, we are unifying ourselves with Him to share in His divinity. This makes our entire existence a life of true service to one another. This moves us beyond immature thoughts of service as a profession, as church ministries, or volunteer work. Jesus wants us to orient all life experiences in a spirit of loving service for ourselves and others: work, family activities, prayer, worship, meditation, recreation, entertainment, volunteering, pondering, suffering, and mourning. This is loving fully and practically. This is how we love and glorify God.

This is not easy. We may be inclined to try to live this way for those who are close to us and those who we are comfortable with. But as Jesus modeled for us, he has a special place in his heart for those who are pushed to the periphery of society. Loving everyone means we have to purposely leave our comfort zones to also serve the poor, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the mentally challenged, the dirty, the imprisoned. We love God with our entire being by loving the entirety of all he has created.

Peace Be With You,

Marc Barrett