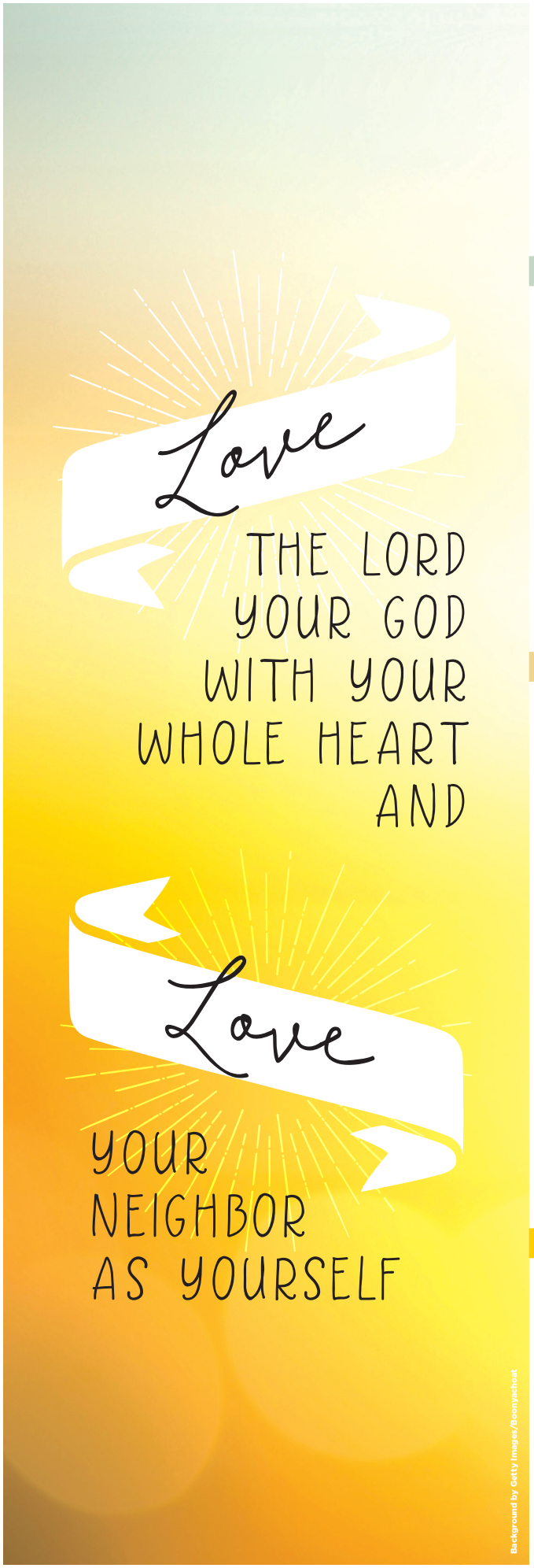

October 25, 2020

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Written by
THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Ex 22:20-26 | 1 Thes 1:5C-10 | Mt 22:34-40

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In today's Gospel, Jesus has just silenced one group of religious leaders, the Sadducees (which seems to be quite a feat, if we look at their behavior in the Scripture!) and is now speaking to another group of religious leaders, the Pharisees. Jesus says that the greatest commandment in all the law is actually two: love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself. These two groups of religious leaders like to test him a lot, and while I might want to tell people like them to take a hike, Jesus never does. He always speaks the truth to them, in love, even if he is frustrated with their behavior.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Sometimes it's hard to see how three particular readings fit together on a Sunday, but I was struck by how well these do. The first reading, listing ways that we should *not* behave, can easily be summed up as: love your neighbor as yourself. We all are, or have been, some form of what the Lord mentions: an outsider (alien), vulnerable (widow/orphan), in financial need (loan recipient), or requiring some other assistance (needing a cloak). How do we want others to treat us in those times? Then we should behave the same. It seems like the Thessalonians understood this, for Paul praises them for being a model for other believers. They have a reputation for being truly loving; of turning to God from idols, and serving him. We can be discouraged by our human failings, as all of us living in lockdown/quarantine these recent months know. It may not take much to set us off. But this is where God's grace can help us to speak truth in love, and be a model for those around us.

ACTIONS Reflect on any obstacles to truly loving God with full heart, mind, and soul. Then think creatively about how to love God, and in turn, others.

- *How I can love God with my whole heart?* After spending time in prayer, write down how you see God in your family and friends. And then go tell them!
- *How I can love God with my whole mind?* Use "online time" to engage with a faith-related website such as Bishop Barron's wordonfire.org, or follow Pope Francis on Twitter.
- *How I can love God with my soul?* Pray the litany of humility.