

**FIRST READING**

You turned away from idols to serve God and await his Son.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians      1:5-8a

**B**rothers and sisters:

When we told you the good news,  
it was with the power and assurance  
that come from the Holy Spirit,  
and not simply with words.

You knew what kind of people we were and how we helped you.  
So, when you accepted the message,  
you followed our example and the example of the Lord.  
You suffered, but the Holy Spirit made you glad.

You became an example for all the Lord's followers  
in Macedonia and Achaia.

And because of you,  
the Lord's message has spread everywhere in those regions.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

18:1-2, 46 and 50ce

*R. (2) I love you, Lord, my strength.*

I love you, Lord God,  
and you make me strong.  
You are my mighty rock,  
my fortress, my protector,  
the rock where I am safe,  
my shield, my powerful weapon,  
and my place of shelter.

*R. I love you, Lord, my strength.*

You are the living Lord!  
I will praise you.  
You are a mighty rock.

I will honor you  
for keeping me safe.  
Your faithful love for David  
will never end.

*R. I love you, Lord my strength.*

## ALLELUIA

John 14:23

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

All who love me will keep my words,  
and my Father will love them,  
and we will come to them.

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

## GOSPEL

Love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 22:34-40

**A**fter Jesus had made the Sadducees look foolish,  
the Pharisees heard about it and got together.  
One of them was an expert in the Jewish Law.  
So he tried to test Jesus by asking,  
“Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?”

Jesus answered:  
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.’  
This is the first and most important commandment.  
The second most important commandment is like this one.  
And it is, ‘Love others as much as you love yourself.’  
All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets  
are based on these two commandments.”

The gospel of the Lord.

## THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

### Prayer:

Dear Jesus,  
Help us to love and care for ourselves and all people.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen

### Readings:

The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 1:5-8a  
Psalm 18:1-2,46 and 50ce  
Matthew 22:34-40

### Reflection and Discussion:

Today's gospel "bottom-lines" it for us. Jesus tells us that there are 2 main, important things we need to know about what He preached and the law of God. "Bottom-line" we are to love God more than anything else and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Simple, right? Yes and no! It is easy to understand the first part, loving God more than anything else but it is not always so easy to do. For example, it can sometimes be hard to love God more than anything else on Sunday mornings when we would *love* to stay in bed or at home watching cartoons. Can you think of other times when it is hard to love God more than anything else?

Jesus is kinda tricky with the second part. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Seems simple but there are actually 3 things we need to be able to do. Before we can love someone else the way we love our self we must first love our self. What are some of they ways we love ourselves and is this always easy? Is it by doing everything that will make us happy? What about when we eat too much candy, which will make us happy but will also make our tummies sick and our bodies unhealthy? Next, in order to love our neighbor as ourselves we must figure out who our neighbor is. Who is Jesus talking about when He says, "Love your neighbor?" Is it only the people who live next door to us? Our family? Our friends? Finally, we have to figure out how to love them. Can you think of some example of how you love your neighbor as your self? It can be very difficult sometimes but Jesus is always there to help us because He loves EVERYONE, including us. If we ask Him, He will help us learn how to love everyone as we love ourselves.

### Activity: Love Necklaces

Materials needed: 24 inch pieces of yarn, enough for everyone in the class. Fruit loop cereal and/or beads.

Preparation: Tie knots at one end of each piece of yarn. Set-out several bowls of the cereal or beads so that several children can share them.

Tell the children that the yarn represents God's love for them and when they finish the project it will be made into a loop that will surround them as God's love does.

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There will be 3 sections to the necklace. Begin by asking each child to briefly describe a way they show their love for God. They will then put a piece of cereal or a bead on the yarn for each example they give. Let each child give 3 or 4 examples. Then put a different colored bead or a knot to separate these examples from the next set. Ask the children to give examples of how they love themselves and place a bead/cereal on the yarn for each example. Place a different colored bead or a knot to separate these from the 3<sup>rd</sup> set. Ask the children to give examples of how they love their neighbors. Tie the 2 ends of the yarn together to make a necklace.

Ask the children to wear their necklaces back to church and after Mass to tell their parents what each bead represents. If using cereal, remind them not to eat it until after Mass.