



*[The scribe said to Jesus,]
"To love your neighbor
as yourself" is worth more
than all burnt offerings
and sacrifices."*

MARK 12:33

Take to Heart These Words

"Hear, O Israel!" (Deuteronomy 6:3) are the first words of the most important declaration of faith for Jewish people, a declaration that is the centerpiece of the morning and evening Jewish prayer services. It is a kind of "pledge of allegiance" that observant Jews say even today, reminding themselves of the uniqueness of their God and the covenantal relationship they have with this God. In it they confess that the Lord is their God, their only God. Out of reverence, they do not pronounce God's personal name. In its place they substitute the word *Lord*. Behind this act of faith is the covenantal promise of God: "I will be your God and you shall be my people" (Jeremiah 7:23).

This covenant carries mutual responsibilities. God will be their God and will be faithful to all that this blessing entails. As God's people, they will live according to the standards set by God, witnessing to the world the holiness in life lived for and with God. They are to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength.

Jesus did not change this declaration in any way. It is at the heart of the Christian way of life as well. What he did was throw light on the meaning of living for and with God, of loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. He insists that to love God is to love others, and to love them as we love ourselves. "Hear, O Israel!" "Take to heart these words" (Deuteronomy 6:6).

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ How in your family or workplace might you show love by being kinder, more patient, and willing to forgive slights?
- ★ How open are you to changing your understanding when a new point of view is offered to you?

Dear Padre,

Does the Church have a position on cosmetic surgery?

For clarity, we understand cosmetic surgery to be a medical intervention that's purely optional and not required to maintain or restore physical health. For example, we aren't considering here plastic surgeries in response to serious injuries from fire or trauma. It's impossible to give a single response about all cosmetic surgery, and the Church has no explicit teaching on the matter. Perhaps some general suggestions will help guide our thinking.

We must first ask what the goal of the surgery is. Face lifts, "nose jobs,"



"tummy tucks," and such are elective surgeries usually pursued because persons are unhappy with their appearance. While there may be instances where people are so distraught over these matters that cosmetic surgery would help them attain some peace and comfort, often these surgeries are motivated by vanity. When these feelings are present, one might ask whether more profound

issues about self-acceptance should be addressed, rather than resorting to changing one's appearance. One should ask how this particular cosmetic surgery would enhance our dignity as one made in God's image.

In a broader context, we might consider how much is spent on "looking better" when many have neither food, shelter, nor proper clothing. A good meditation is to think first of Jesus' concern for the poor and then how he wishes to work through us to take care of his poor as the body of Christ.

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Do you have a question for the Padre?

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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Vanity never heals. Rather, it is poisonous, it goes on bringing the disease in your heart, bringing you that hardness of heart that tells you: "No, do not go to the Lord, do not go. Stay by yourself." Vanity is precisely the place to close ourselves to the call of the Lord.

HOMILY, MARCH 10, 2020

Calendar

Monday

NOVEMBER 1

All Saints

Rv 7:2-4, 9-14

1 Jn 3:1-3

Mt 5:1-12a

Tuesday

NOVEMBER 2

*Commemoration
of All the Faithful
Departed (All Souls)*

Wis 3:1-9

Rom 5:5-11

Jn 6:37-40

Wednesday

NOVEMBER 3

Weekday

Rom 13:8-10

Lk 14:25-33

Thursday

NOVEMBER 4

*St. Charles Borromeo,
Bishop*

Rom 14:7-12

Lk 15:1-10

Friday

NOVEMBER 5

Weekday

Rom 15:14-21

Lk 16:1-8

Saturday

NOVEMBER 6

Weekday

Rom 16:3-9,

16, 22-27

Lk 16:9-15

Sunday

NOVEMBER 7

*Thirty-second Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

1 Kgs 17:10-16

Heb 9:24-28

Mk 12:38-44 or

12:41-44