

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

By Al Mansfield

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Psalm 69

Colossians 1:15-20

Luke 10:25-37

THAT THING IS IN YOU

In years gone by when I was preparing to give a talk, my friend Bob, now deceased, used to tell me, “that thing is in you.” He was referring to the word of God. And that is actually the message in today’s readings. God’s law, God’s word, is in our hearts. The Good Samaritan had God’s law of love and charity in his heart.

DEUTERONOMY

“For this command I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you.” God’s law is not up in the air nor across the sea. “That thing is in you,” as Bob would say. It is in your mouth and in your heart. The bottom line? “You have only to carry it out.” The Responsorial, Psalm 69, emphasizes that the Lord is close to those in need.

GOSPEL

In the gospels of Matthew and Mark, it is Jesus who answers the question about the greatest commandment. However, in today’s gospel from Luke, the scholar answers his own question by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might, and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus answers the second question, “Who is my neighbor?”, by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan loved his neighbor, who happened to be a Jew, by showing kindness to him and taking care of his needs. The law of God truly dwelt in his heart.

COLOSSIANS

There are several passages that speak of the Second Person of the Trinity and all creation. John 1:13 says that, “all things came into being through him, and without him, nothing came into being.” Hebrews 1:3 tells us that “(God’s Son) is the radiance of the Father’s glory and the exact expression of his substance, upholding all things by the power of his word...” In the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, it is common to call Christ Pantocrator – almighty or all-powerful – holding all creation in existence.

This is the point of our second reading from Colossians, bringing out the utter preeminence of Christ. We are told that Jesus is “the firstborn of all creation.” All things have been created in Christ, through him and for him.

Jesus is the head of the Church and all the fullness of the Godhead is in him. He reconciles all things, making peace through the blood of his cross. Indeed he is worthy of the fullness of our love and obedience.

LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOR

Jesus has told us that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

God is our creator and redeemer. He also dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. If his Spirit dwells in us, we will be led to keep the first and greatest commandment of loving God and also the second, of loving our neighbor as ourselves.

As Bob used to say, “that thing is in you.”