



Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday 4th November 2018

In England & Wales – Cycle of Prayer:

Those who suffer persecution, oppression and denial of human rights

Keynote: The first priority: to love God and neighbour

Book of Deuteronomy 6: 2-6

‘Observe what will make you prosper,’ Moses tells the people: *‘as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you... Listen Israel: The Lord our God is the one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart.’* These words direct our attention to the Gospel today, there is only one God to love and serve. This is the greatest commandment of the Law.

Responsorial Psalm 17 (18): 2-4, 47, 51 – A victory song rejoicing in God’s love and protection

Letter to the Hebrews 7: 23–28

Again comparing the Temple priesthood, and the priesthood of the New Covenant in Christ, the writer of this letter shows how the priests of former years, had to spend time atoning for their own sins, while Christ, *‘because he remains for ever, can never lose his priesthood’* – is for us the ideal priest and in the words of what may be an early Christian hymn, Christ is, *‘holy, innocent, uncontaminated, beyond the influence of sinners, and raised up above the heavens... the Son who is made perfect for ever.’* We are truly blessed to know Christ.

Gospel according to Mark 12: 28-34

‘One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Not a hostile question, as many Jewish Rabbis would have been presented with the same or a similar question. Jesus’ reply goes to the heart of the issue. *‘First... the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.’* Jesus continues, the second is *‘you must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these.’* *‘Well spoken, Master’* replies the scribe *‘what you have said is true.’* Someone who keeps this commandment of love may take heart, for Jesus says, *‘you are not far from the kingdom of God’*. Hardly surprising that *‘after that no one dared to question him any more.’*

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