Rev. Derek Fairman

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

In the readings for this 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, we hear about the importance of loving God and our neighbors. The first commandment is that we should love God with our hearts, our souls, and our minds. St. Augustine explained that this means there is no part of us which is excluded from our devotion to the Lord. There is nothing in our wills that should find delight in anything else. Everything in our lives can find meaning and purpose in God.

During this month of the Holy Rosary, we remember the fifth Joyful Mystery, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. The Finding of the Lord Jesus in the Temple takes us back to the time of Moses. Moses' mother put him in a basket and put the basket in the river. Miriam, Moses' sister, watched what happened to him. When Pharaoh's daughter found him, Miriam offered to find a woman to nurse the child, and so Moses' mother received him back again for a time. We might imagine the joy she felt when she received him again and knew that he would be taken care of by Pharoah's daughter. Whenever the Lord Jesus was lost for three days in Jerusalem, we might imagine the Blessed Virgin's joy at seeing Him again and receiving Him.

The Finding in the Temple also recalls Huldah the prophetess. At the time of the good King Josiah, priests in the Temple were making repairs to the Temple, and they found a copy of a book, but they did not understand it. It was an early version of the Book of Deuteronomy, more than likely, but the king and priests needed to be sure, so they consulted Huldah the prophetess, who explained that, yes, it is the Book of the Law of Moses. The people would suffer for not following the commands of the Lord written within it. That is when King Josiah began a religious reform which would last even after the Babylonian Exile. The Virgin Mary herself found the Word of God, her Son, in the Temple after looking for Him for three days.

For the Virgin Mary, her heart was completely dedicated to the Lord. While He remained in the Temple area, she looked for Him wholeheartedly. Our hearts can be divided. We might be tempted to have some devotion to the Lord, but then we are devoted to something else. Our hearts are not with the Lord entirely. We might remember God's favor to David, that the Lord was like a father to David. David's heart was dedicated to the Lord. He did not worship the Lord but then idols; he only worshipped the Lord. He sinned, however, and the Lord punished David for doing so. Yet David's heart did not stray to idols, and the Lord continued his dynasty, even during dark days. We can be like David whose heart was not divided between God and the world.

The same is true with our minds. Our minds can be formed by the world. We can take in the false values that we find on television, or online. We can take on not the mind of Christ, as St. Paul teaches us, but rather we look at the world through the eyes of selfishness. We can look at the world through the eyes of this or that philosophy. When we offer our minds to God, what kind of offering do we make? Do we make an offering that comes from Him? Or do we make an offering that comes from the world around us? For the Virgin Mary, her mind was dedicated to listening to the Lord and following His commands. Her mind was formed by the Lord, and as the Lord taught the scholars in the Temple for three days, so He taught His attentive Mother. She chose the better part.

The same is true with our souls. We can dedicate our wills, memories, consciences, and whatever else exists in our souls to God. If we look after our own interests, if our wills seek what we want and ignore the needs of others, then we do not love God with our whole souls. If we seek to put God and others before our own interests, then we can love God with our whole souls. Maybe our souls are somewhere in the middle: we want to do God's will sometimes, but if it does not interfere with our plans. When we offer our souls to God, then we can find joy and peace. That is what the Virgin Mary found when she found her Son in the Temple.

We can find in our lives what we are seeking. If we have divided hearts, if our minds focused elsewhere, and if our souls are where fear, anxiety, and looking after our interests dominate, we will be missing something. But if we can love God with our hearts, our minds, our souls, then we will find the Lord Jesus within our souls, and He will teach us and bring us joy.

What are we seeking? For the Mother of God, she lost her Son while He was in the Temple and sought Him and found Him again. Maybe we are looking for a better relationship with family or friends. Maybe there are ways that we feel a person is lost to us. When we grow closer to God, we know that the Lord Jesus can bridge any gap, solve any problem, and reconcile those who are apart. We can see past problems, not by ignoring those problems, but by seeing that there is more to the situation than just problems.

As we approach the altar, we thank the Lord for the ways in which He brings transformation and healing to our lives. We ask the Lord to continue to heal our wounds and bring us peace and transformation. Our love for the Lord will grow as we experience that healing and transformation, and that love is something we can offer to Him at Mass. Then we can fulfill the greatest commandment, to love God with our hearts, minds, and souls.