

## **REFLECTION FOR FOR THE 15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

The Theme of today's readings is: Loving God and neighbour, the two fundamental pillars of Christian life.

In the word of God proposed to us on this fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, a fundamental question echoes for all men and women who are concerned about the meaning of existence: what must we do to find eternal life? The answers offered to us today help define the path we must follow throughout our pilgrimage on earth, with eternal life as our goal.

In the first reading, Moses reminds the Hebrews, about to enter the Promised Land, that they must at every step of their lives and history listen to the voice of God, fulfil the precepts and commandments that God has given them, and convert to Him with all their heart and soul. If the people persevere on this path, they will find life and happiness. It is a path that involves listening to the Lord who speaks to our hearts, always keeping His will and His commandments before us. And Moses tells us that these are not difficult commandments to keep, because the word of the Lord "is close to us, it is in our mouth and in our heart". We must be attentive, seeking at every moment to follow God's ways, loving Him with all our heart, our soul, our understanding, and loving our neighbour as ourselves.

In the second reading, St. Paul writing to the Colossians presents us with a hymn celebrating the universal greatness of Christ, who has sovereignty over all creation and is the head of the Church. Christ brought God into our history by becoming one of us. In Christ, God became visible. Christ is therefore the image of the invisible God. Everything was created through Christ, and all creation was saved and reconciled through his blood shed on the cross. We Christians must look to Christ and see in him our God who, out of love, came to dwell among us, learning to love as he did, knowing that it is through this path of love that we will attain eternal life. Let us praise Christ as our God and Lord, our Saviour, and let us listen to his Word, loving everyone as he loved us.

In the Gospel, Jesus helps a “teacher of the Law” to realise that life must be built around two fundamental axis: love of God and compassion for one's “neighbour”. And to make things perfectly clear, Jesus tells a parable that defines who this ‘neighbour’ is: it is anyone we come across who needs our care, our concern, our love. If we want to live God's love in us, we must choose total love for our brother, our ‘neighbour,’ whoever he may be, without distinction of language, race, people or nation. For God there is no man or woman, no slave or free person, no Greek or Jew... all are children and He wants us to love and care for them all, as He does. We can never leave our brother abandoned and fallen on the road of our life. We must reach out to everyone; we must love everyone.

The doctor of the Law asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ And Jesus answered him with a parable in which he said: do not ask who your neighbour is, but rather concern yourself with being a neighbour to all the men and women you meet on the paths of your life. Love everyone, help everyone, welcome everyone, open your heart to everyone, knowing that when you do this, when you love your brother, you are loving God. And by following these commandments, you will find true happiness and the way to attain eternal life.

AMEN