

An interviewer was talking to Mother Theresa

The topic of Eucharistic Adoration came up

The interviewer commented that if she didn't spend an hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament each morning, she could use that hour to help even more people

Mother Theresa responded by saying that without the hour of Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, none of the rest of it would happen

It was only after spending time with Jesus, body, blood, soul, and divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament that Mother Theresa could see the face of Jesus in the face of the poorest of the poor on the street of Calcutta, India

The first reading instructs us not to take advantage of the poor

However, Mother Theresa went way beyond this - she loved them

Only after receiving God's love and loving Him back in an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament was she able to pass that love on to others in a deep and profound way

Mother Theresa understood the order of the 10 Commandments

In the 10 Commandments, the first three concern our relationship with God and the last seven concern our relationship with others

Just a side note, the Protestants number the 10 Commandments differently than we Catholics do - They list the first 4 commandments as having to do with God - so the first one to do with our relationship with other people, honor thy father and mother, is number 5 for them - for us, this is commandment number 4 - whenever I see a Protestant listing of the 10 Commandments in a Catholic place, I rip it down immediately and violently - just kidding - sometimes, depending on the situation, I'll say something

The 10 Commandments are 10 of 613 precepts that Jewish scholars had identified in the Torah

The Jewish Torah is just the first five books of our Bible - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
Even though it is the inspired Word of God, if you are having a hard time sleeping, just read Leviticus or Numbers, especially Numbers

So the Pharisees prided themselves on knowing all 613 precepts of the Torah, also known as the Books of Moses because tradition says Moses wrote them

If you want an easy way to remember the difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, there is a vacation Bible school song called "I Just Wanna Be a Sheep"

Now I have to admit, it is one of my least favorite vacation Bible school songs because I find it more on the annoying side of things - however it is educational

The song says the Sadducees are sad you see - the song doesn't say why, and truth be told, they probably weren't all sad all the time - but the point is the Sadducees were "sad you see" because they were a sect of Judaism that didn't believe in life after death whereas the Pharisees did believe in life after death

So after the Sadducees had failed to trip up Jesus, they came back to the corner and sent their tag team partner, the Pharisees into the ring to do some verbal wrestling with Jesus

Now the Pharisees pride themselves on knowing all 613 precepts forwards and backwards - so to see if Jesus knew what he was talking about or if he was just a fraud, they asked him what the greatest commandment was

This is like when you teacher would ask you to summarize a whole book in one or two sentences - not fun at least for me - I would rather do math problems

Anyway, Jesus answers in the same order as the 10 commandments, and the same way Mother Theresa lived her life

First Jesus speaks about our love for God and then about our love for our neighbor

Sometimes it seems like the Catholic Church has even more than 613 precepts - however, the laws of the Catholic Church can indeed be summarized in the same way - "Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself."

So we must love God - but 1 John 4:19 says "We love because He first loved us" - in order for us to love God and others we must let Him love us

We must open our hearts to Him in prayer, but also in all areas of our lives

Many people help others without a concrete relationship with Jesus - but by grounding our love for others first in our love for God, our love for others will be deeper and more authentic

Our love for others needs to be grounded in our love for God

If it starts with God first loving us and us loving Him back, then how do we grow in ability to respond to God's love?

The same way it does with other relationships - the more we know about God, the more we will love Him

Remember Jesus said we are to love God not only with our heart and soul, but also our mind

I like math and engineering - I like linear thinking - you have a starting point and an ending point - what is the process to get from one point to the other?

However, eastern philosophy and ways of approaching the spiritual life are more circular

In one of my classes in seminary I had to read a book by Fr. Cantalamessa, who served as Preacher to the Papal Household under JP II and now under Pope Benedict

Fr. Cantalamessa writes in this circular style - thus I hated reading it, but even so, this circular approach says a lot about our spiritual life

So often we find ourselves making the same sins over and over again or even more frustrating, committing a sin again that we haven't committed in a long time - we seem to find ourselves in the same place over and over again

In linear thinking this would be true

However, a circular, or better yet, a spiral understanding of our faith journey says that even though we seem to be dealing with a past problem, that we have circled around, we have not circled, but spiraled - spiraled to a similar place, but

a deeper place - we are able to approach life in a deeper and more profound way - it may be the same problem, sin, or bad habit, but we are in a different and deeper place

This is why it is important that we never stop growing in our relationship with God - we must go ever deeper - we see this often in older couples - we see how the years have only deepened their love and relationship with each other

Our relationship with God must be given the time and energy to mature as well

Ninety-nine percent of us in our community would never think about quitting school after 10th grade - that we then knew it all - although some of us acted like we did

Confirmation is not graduation - Confirmation is not an excuse to quit learning about God and to quit going to church

We should never quit growing in our knowledge and relationship with God

Learning not just about the world, but also about God, should be a life long process

That is why Catholic parishes all over the world, even our parish, are expending resources on adult faith formation

The more we know, the better we can love God with all our hearts, minds, and souls

And then we will be better able to love others with not just human love, but with that supernatural divine love that we have first received from God

So our love for others must flow from our love of God - our relationship with others must flow from our relationship with God

So, today, are you allowing anything to keep you from fully receiving God's love and loving others?