

Father Rudy's Reflections  
The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 29, 2023

## Love in Action

My Sisters and Brothers in the Risen Lord,

As we look around our world today, especially when viewing negative news reports, we see many examples of injustice, cruelty, and abhorrence toward one another. It seems to be such a mean society, and our lack of civility paints a very disappointing picture of who we are. Yet, if we tune in to the small things, those little glimmers of light in our daily doings, we might discover an alternative perspective. Those small kindnesses we observe—the smiles, helpfulness, generosity, compliments, and care someone might show to another person— can give us great hope that we might shift from these small acts to larger ones if we embrace life as Jesus did. Kindness is not an art; it's a necessity.

In Matthew's Gospel on this Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus continues to be hounded by the Pharisees, scribes, etc., during his final visit to Jerusalem. They confront him with the hope of entrapment with clever questions about Jewish laws and traditions. In this Gospel, one last question is posed: "Which commandment is greatest?" Jesus, with great deliberateness of purpose that encapsulates both the Torah and his own teaching, gives them just two commandments: to love God and love our neighbor. His response silences his adversaries and is a *tour de force* in describing Christianity for all of us. We must live and act by these words as our highest of values.

In finding examples of those who are totally in sync with the two-part dimension of faith—love of God and love of neighbor—we can turn to our Catholic saints whose lives emulated these commandments in a variety of ways. One special saint is St. Teresa of Calcutta, canonized by Pope Francis on Sept. 4, 2016. Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in 1910, this remarkable woman lived most of her life in India where she founded a religious order of sisters called the Missionaries of Charity. These sisters ministered during her life to the sick and the poor in soup kitchens, dispensaries, mobile clinics, children's and family counselling programs, as well as orphanages and schools, with special emphasis for those dying of HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis. Although she struggled with feelings of inadequacy regarding her own faith, she is a hero to all Christians everywhere; she left a testament of unshakable faith, invincible hope, and extraordinary charity. Her life embodies Jesus's words in Matthew 22. May we follow in her unwavering light and perform our own acts of kindness to all whom we encounter through all the days of our lives. Let us ponder St. Teresa's words of wisdom:

*"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."*

*"True love is love that causes us pain, that hurts, and yet brings us joy. That is why we must pray to God and ask Him to give us the courage to love."*

*"Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier."*

Yours in Christ,

Father Rudy