

30th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Exodus 22:20-26
Ps 18:2-4,47,51
1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10
Matthew 22:34-40

Monday October 26

Ephesians 4:32--5:8
Ps 1:1-4,6
Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday October 27

Ephesians 5:21-33
Ps 128:1-5
Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday October 28

Sts. Simon and Jude

Ephesians 2:19-22
Ps 19:2-5
Luke 6:12-16

Thursday October 29

Ephesians 6:10-20
Ps 144:1b,2,9-10
Luke 13:31-35

Friday October 30

Philippians 1:1-11
Ps 111:1-6
Luke 14:1-6

Saturday October 31

Philippians 1:18b-26
Ps 42:2,3,5
Luke 14:1, 7-11

Today's Gospel reading reminds us that we cannot love God without loving ourselves *and* others, but God must always come first.

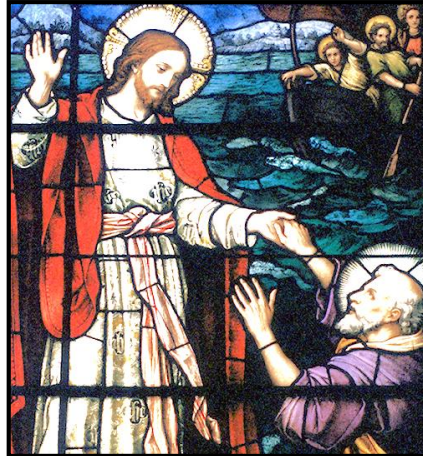
When we have difficulty loving God with all our heart, mind and soul all the time, every day, every moment, no matter what's going on, it's because we're spending too much time focused on other people and/or on our own plans and wishes.

Yes, we must focus on others in order to love them. And yes we must focus on our own needs so that we can love others *as much* as we love ourselves. Our own needs are important and we are responsible for seeing that our needs get met; otherwise we don't have enough to share with others—enough energy or enthusiasm or kindness or patience. Likewise, we

shouldn't focus so much on ourselves that we neglect the needs of others.

So the question then becomes: What are the priorities? In other words: How much time should we spend alone with God? How much time should we spend nurturing ourselves? How much of our time and needs and wants should be sacrificed for the sake of others?

Interestingly, we find the right balance only after we put God first and make our relationship with him our highest



priority. This divine friendship is what heals us in our unmet needs. It's what empowers us to love others even when they are difficult to love. And we don't have to be alone with God all day to have intimacy with him.

We love him first and foremost simply by relying on him for success in loving others and ourselves. If we keep turning to him for guidance, healing and strength, we are loving him with all our heart, mind and soul all the time, every day, every moment, no matter what's going on.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. How good are you at setting priorities and keeping God at the top?
2. What puts your priorities out of order?
3. What can you do to increase God's role in your everyday life?
4. Describe some of the techniques you've used to increase God's priority in your everyday life.
5. How has focusing on your relationship with God helped you to be more loving to yourself and kinder toward others?