

# Sunday Homily

## 31st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

31 OCTOBER 2021

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III

“There is no commandment greater than these.”

### Illustration

In Oxford, England, there is a Catholic Worker House, part of the international Catholic Worker movement. It is a Christian community in which love of God and love of neighbour are at the heart of everything.

Every morning, the three people who live at the Oxford house spend time in prayer and reflection. They do this to keep in close touch with the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. They also believe that the Spirit of God is within every person, and so time is spent quietly discerning God’s will in guiding their lives.

As for love of neighbour, the community offers hospitality to people in need. A couple of spare bedrooms are given over to destitute asylum seekers. The house is also an open-door home where people who are lonely, needy or just looking for some company can enjoy a cup of tea and a warm welcome. The community also believes that living an environmentally sustainable lifestyle and working for peace are an important service to neighbours in the wider community. Members grow their own vegetables on an allotment, borrow or buy things second-hand and travel without a car. The community also involves itself in peace activities, particularly vigils and protests against the expansion of nuclear weapons establishments in the Oxford area.

### Gospel Teaching

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is asked by a scribe to settle what was at that time a regular dispute among rabbis: which commandment is the greatest? Jewish law contained over six hundred different regulations, and it was common for scholars to try to distil them into fewer, more fundamental principles. How does Jesus respond? “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” He then says that the second great commandment is to “love your neighbour as yourself”. He tells the scribe that he is close to the kingdom of God because he realises that love of God and of neighbour is more important than the religious observances at the Temple.

Yet how do we express our love for God and neighbour? Despite so many of our songs and hymns and sermons being devoted to the subject of loving God, how do we actually do it in practical terms? Jesus does the best job of explaining what loving God means in the second of his great commands: “love your neighbour as yourself”. Loving our neighbours is something we can tangibly do on a