

Love Your Neighbor

A while back, I was standing in line for confession on a Friday afternoon. A man was talking loudly and asked for money. I gave him a few dollars. I told him I was going to confession. "What are your sins?" he asked. I laughed and said "I'll tell the priest." I will tell you what I confess almost every time: "I don't love my neighbor as myself." I went to Medugorje in late June. I asked Mirjana, one of the visionaries, "What is God's perfect will for me?" She answered, "Don't ask for anything in particular, just put everything in God's hands." I thought that was a very wise answer. I went to two masses a day, one in English and one in Croatian. The theme of love came up over and over again.

In today's Gospel, we have the two great commandments: "Love God. Love your neighbor," and we have the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10.25-37). A man was robbed, beaten badly and left for dead. A priest and a Levi pass him by. A Samaritan helps him and pays for his medical care. "Go and do likewise," Jesus said. At one of the Masses I attended the priest asked "What is love?" then he pointed out that Christ crucified is love revealed to humanity. He pointed out how the Father gives himself totally to the Son and the Son gives himself totally to the Father and that "Love" is the Holy Spirit. He pointed out that true love is self-giving and self sacrifice. He said that selfishness is un-love. "Selfish people are not Christian." He said.

We visited a place called "Comunita Cenacolo," founded by Sr Elvira. She started her ministry in Italy, then established a community in Medugorje. She said "God gave me the strength to follow what he indicated to me day by day, and this path has slowly opened wide and has welcomed with open arms many young people in need of love. Today, these arms embrace the whole world, and now they are not only mine. They are the arms of many young people who, after having received the love of God, decided like I did to trust in him and give themselves to those in need with the same love they have freely received." She takes in all kinds of young people and gives them love, prayer, work and community.

Every Mass we witness God's love. There is no greater love than Christ Jesus, the Son of God crucified on the cross and incarnate in the Host that we receive. God loves us totally and wants us to love him totally and to give his love to those who need it the most.