

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

Fort Yuma, California, P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283 Tel: 760-572-0283

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
October 25, 2020

Website: www.stthomasindianmission.org
Email: saintthomasindianmission@gmail.com
Pastor: Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa

Our Sunday Masses are celebrated outdoors, for the time being, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 7:30 AM, in the PARKING AREA by the Parish Hall.

Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 feet between people of different households) before, during, and after the Mass. Holy Communion is to be given only after the Final Blessing, in the hand.

1st Reading:
Exodus 22:20-26

Thus, says the LORD: "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans. "If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset; for this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. What else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am compassionate."
The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

Our Response:
I love you, Lord,
my strength.
(Repeat)

I love you, O Lord, my strength, O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

R.
My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold! Praised be the Lord, I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies.

R.
The Lord lives and blessed be my rock! Extolled be God my savior. You who gave great victories to your king and showed kindness to your anointed. **R.**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him and we will come to him.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

2nd Reading:

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Brothers and sisters: You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit, so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves openly declare about us what sort of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath. *The Word of the Lord.*

Gospel Reading: [Matthew 22:34-40](#)

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."
The Gospel of the Lord.

Prayer of the Faithful

Celebrant: We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves and so we call to mind not only our needs but also the needs of our neighbors, here and across the world.

Lector:

1) For the Church, that we may always reach out to those in need with material and spiritual aid and extend God's grace to every corner of the world, we pray to the Lord.

2) For the aliens and widowed, the orphaned and poor of today's world who need our love and compassion, so that they may find peace and serenity in their difficult circumstances, we pray to the Lord.

3) For those around the world who are persecuted for their faith, that the early church in communities like Thessalonica may give them hope and inspiration, we pray to the Lord.

4) For the courage to advocate and promote political decisions that reflect our call to consistently love our neighbors, from their conception to their natural death, we pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: Living and true God, you are our strength and our refuge. Hear the prayers of your people, which we make through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT!

We meditated already on the topic love of neighbor on the 7th Sunday of the Year. But there the stress was on love of enemies. Today, we want to meditate more on the intimate unity between the two great commandments to love God and to love our neighbor.

In this connection let us remember last Sunday's Gospel where Jesus advises the Pharisees to return to Caesar (the emperor) the coin that bears his image but to return to God what bears God's image, that is, themselves, made in the image of God.

Christ clearly distinguishes between love of God and love of neighbor, calling God's love the first and greatest commandment and love of neighbor the second. Even though Jesus distinguishes them in this way, he does not separate them. He insists that the second is like the first.

We cannot love God and not love our neighbor, but there is more to it than that. The love of God has priority and is the source of love for neighbor. In our neighbor we see something of God, his creature, his image and likeness, and if we love God, we must also love his image, the work of his hands.

As St. Bernard said: "We love God because He is infinite goodness. We love ourselves because we are created in God's image. We love others because they also are made in the likeness of God. All of us are endowed with the same dignity. God is our Father, and we are his children." To love our neighbor then means to love all of humankind. It is to love human life.

Thus, we cannot compartmentalize our faith. We must love our neighbors from their conception to their natural death. The Gospel commands us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, especially the vulnerable ones, namely, the ones who are as yet in the womb; the widows, orphans, the poor, the refugees and immigrants, whether legal or illegal -- they are all among our vulnerable neighbors. How we treat them must be guided by the Gospel more than by our political position, our fears or prejudices.

All You Need Is Love!

Those of you who are my age, more or less, may still remember John Lennon's bouncy song "All You Need Is Love," written in the 60s. The British Broadcasting Corporation commissioned the Beatles to write a song for the United Kingdom's contribution to the world's first live global satellite television link. The song was first performed by the Beatles on June 25, 1967 (incidentally, the day I entered the seminary). The satellite program reached 26 countries and was heard by 350 million people. Since then, "All You Need Is Love" has become one of the most famous songs sung by the Beatles. Moreover, it is ranked among the best songs of all time. It's an idea we can all sing about.

LET US SEE OURSELVES IN OUR NEIGHBOR!

Today we hear the LORD remind the Israelites of their past, where they'd come from and what they overcame. We come here today as we are now, but we must recall who we were in the past, what we have accomplished and what we have overcome. We can empathize with our neighbor, for the joys, difficulties, and worries she is experiencing today are comparable to what we have ourselves experienced. Let us thank God for the grace that brought us here today and the continued grace to see ourselves in our neighbor.

The Lord has ears for everyone's prayers, but the reading from Exodus emphasizes God's attentiveness to the pleas of those most in need. The LORD surely hears the cry of the wronged widow and orphan, the alien and the debtor. They are some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in society, then and now. The Chosen People had recently lived in subjection in Egypt. They definitely should be able to empathize with those who suffer a similar sort of plight now, those who are dependent on the mercy and goodness of others.

"You were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt," the LORD said to the Israelites (Exodus 22:20). We may be aliens ourselves in the country in which we live, or perhaps we were once. Perhaps we have never had the experience of calling a new country home, but probably our parents, grandparents, or great grandparents did. Very few of us do not have an ancestor who was once an alien here. Therefore, even if we were never aliens ourselves, a line can be drawn to our forebears who were.

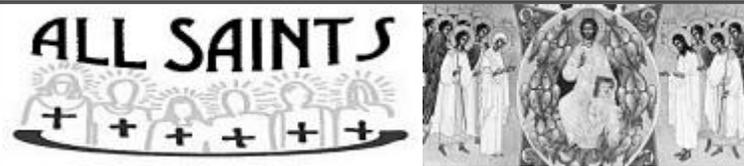
In the Gospel, Jesus tells the Pharisees that love of God and love of neighbor is the fulfillment of the whole law. As St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans: "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law."

Let us pray for the grace to treat our neighbor as we treat ourselves so that we can be like the Thessalonians, whom Saint Paul calls "a model for all the believers." The Thessalonians gave witness to the gospel by their charitable lifestyle, even in a time of suffering.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Society for the Propagation of the Faith
Diocese of San Diego, P.O. Box 82386,
San Diego, CA 92138-2386:

Thanks for your participation! Thank you for answering, "Here I Am, Send Me" to your baptismal call to witness for mission on World Mission Sunday! Please continue to pray for missionaries, and for the people to whom they bring the "Good News" of Jesus. May God bless you for your generous missionary spirit!



NEXT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, IS ALL SAINTS DAY!

How wonderful to celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints on a Sunday this year, the day on which we remember all those holy men and women who have come before us. The Church is a living entity transcending time and space and so we are joined with the saints and they with us as we strive to live lives that witness to our faith.



**REMEMBERING OUR
DEPARTED BROTHERS &
SISTERS PRAYERFULLY**

VIA THE ALL SOULS DAY NOVENA

I will be saying (by myself) a novena of Masses (9 consecutive Masses) for the faithful departed starting on November 1st (All Saints Day), and ending on November 9th. If you want to include your deceased relatives in my novena of Masses, we have envelopes available on which you write their names and in which you place your donation/offering.

According to the norms governing novena Masses, the priest is permitted to retain a \$10 stipend for each Mass offered during the novena. Any amount exceeding the \$10 stipend for each Mass of the novena is to be given to a charity. It is not to be used for parish maintenance.

I would like to say that in my case, I also opt to give to a designated charity the stipend that I am permitted to retain. I give it in the name of or as the charity of, the faithful departed that I say Mass for.

Lest we forget that laughter is also a medicine:

Two guys are walking down the street when a mugger approaches them and demands their money. They both grudgingly pull out their wallets and begin taking out their cash. Just then one guy turns to the other and hands him a bill. "Here's that \$50 I owe you," he says.

A "SITUATIONER."

Our Present Schedule, for the time being:

As you all know very well, due to the COVID-19, there are diocesan and county guidelines that we need to follow. Among them is that indoor gatherings are not allowed.

Thus we celebrate our Sunday Masses outdoors, in the PARKING AREA by the Parish Hall,

on Saturdays at 4:30 PM

and on Sundays at 7:30 AM.

Our Post-Pandemic Schedule:

Please don't forget that, God willing, when the threat of Covid-19 is gone, when the situation is stabilized or back to normal, when we will be given the go-ahead to use our Church as before, the Schedule that we will immediately follow will be as follows:

Sunday Masses (We follow Arizona Time):

Saturday 4:30 PM

Sunday 9:30 AM

Holy Hour/Private Adoration before the Exposed Blessed Sacrament:

Saturday 3:15 PM to 4:15 PM

Sunday 8:15 AM to 9:15 AM

Confessions:

Saturday 3:45 PM to 4:15 PM

Sunday 8:45 AM to 9:15 AM

For Baptism & Marriage Requirements, please visit our website.

Note: Our Church is CLOSED on weekdays. Tourists and sightseers may visit our Church when it is open on Saturday afternoons and/or Sunday mornings, as long as they observe proper visiting manners.

The above Post-Pandemic Schedule will be on the 2021 Calendar that I will mail to each registered parishioner in early December. If ever the situation will be back to normal starting this Advent, I intend to give an Advent Spiritual Conference two times, namely: on a Saturday — 3:30pm to 4:15pm, and on a Sunday — 8:30am to 9:15am

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