



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

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

***Readings: Exodus 22: 20-26, Psalm 17, 1 Thessalonians 1: 5-10,
Matthew 22: 34-40***

‘With all your heart and with your mind and with all your soul and with all your strength and.....’

In the course of my lifetime the Church has enjoyed two Popes who were unquestionably among the most brilliant intellects to occupy the throne of Peter. One, the recently retired Bavarian brilliance of Benedict XVI, the other, of course, his longtime colleague and sometime master, John Paul II.

When the shock news emerged that the Conclave had done the unthinkable and elected a Polish Pope – can you imagine, my dears, a Polish Pope – a European backwoodsman etc etc? One of the first jobs, apart from teaching him to use the right knife and fork, was to get his Papal insignia sorted, his badge of office, his heraldic shield and motto. The heraldry advisers were sent in – argent, rampant, gules, chevrons, traditional signs by the shedload.

The newly elevated Karol Wojtilja was quite clear – two things alone would suffice. ‘But, your Holiness, these aren’t in the tradition of heraldic device.’

It's not clear whether John Paul II needed to reply or just give one of those penetrating looks. Either way it was agreed that he was the Pope and, primitive and unorthodox as his choice may be, that would be the shield and the motto.

We all know that what St. John Paul the Great opted for was

The Cross of Christ – from which all else flows and

A large blue 'M' for His Blessed Mother (and ours) whose assent and consent made our salvation possible in Christ and to whom Karol had dedicated himself long since as his guardian and protector.

The motto was naive and beautiful and filled with love –

TOTUS TUUS - ALL YOURS.

It was a sign and a promise that the Saint would spend his entire life fulfilling.

It was and remains the signal that the path to sanctity, while not easy, is essentially a very simple one. For all the immense intellectual clout and comprehension of the great man, all, in the end, is reduced to this.

So it is with Jesus call to us in the Gospel today.

The Great Commandments are but two. On them depend everything else. Both are commands to love – to emulate God.

We are exhorted to love the Lord our God with all our heart.

For a human being the heart is seen as the centre of our emotional life, our desire, longing, affection, devotion. Our hearts may be swayed by many things and, on its own, our emotions are not a secure guide to truth. But if our heart-life has not been captured by the transcendent beauty of God and a wonder at His amazing love, the rest becomes a gymnastic exercise of intellectual aridity. To fall in love with God is the joyful work of a lifetime. It depends, like all love affairs, on the appreciation of the other, the awareness of the deep beauty, the time spent in each other's

presence, the deep trust of fidelity and the comfortable silence of the soul before the beloved. Here we are most inspired by our time before the Blessed Sacrament, our moments of contemplation, walking with Our Lady in the Rose Garden, catching glimpses of the eternal in the everyday glory of the Mass.

But our heart is not enough, albeit it takes priority as the gateway here. We must engage our minds. This is more difficult for some than others. We may find the heart route easy, the mind tough. Conversely we may find our intellectual conviction simple and the letting go in the heart a real challenge. Either way, both are required of us. For those who find the mind route challenging it is consoling to see how the great mind of John Paul II could simplify it to his shield. We are not all called to be intellectual giants but we are all called to study and know the reasons for our Faith, lest our love atrophy into mere sentimentalism. Loving the Word. Hearing the commentaries. Knowing our Catechism. These are not optional extras. The clever who fear the implications of the heart and the lovers who fear the disciplines of the mind can help each other here. The mind can also be the key to the heart. It is, after all, the control panel. Our imagination, the place where our images of reality are constructed need to be won over too for they are often a key to our loyalty and endurance. We need to be learned and always learning in both departments.

‘With all your soul’ – this is the place of our deepest being, beyond but in perpetual touch with the other outward forms of heart and mind, the repository of what will one day constitute the eternal. The feeding of our souls and their inextricable dependence upon their origin and their end is the place of wordless communion- the deep echoing vaults of the self which God alone can plumb and which, by His Holy Spirit, he explores with us as we invite Him so to do in prayer. It is the place of our becoming and it must be also utterly surrendered in love.

These great calls will require all our strength. Beyond the highest call of the greatest love of the most wonderful marriage, Christ calls us into a love affair which is an unending journey into the heart of the Other, God Himself. And our uninhibited invitation to Him to fill our hearts and minds and souls with the purifying and energising and glorious and exciting fire of His love.

Only then we can we understand how God loves our neighbours and so emulate His love for them and fulfil the Second Great Commandment.

From the Cross of Christ, in company with Our Blessed Mother let us proclaim

Heart, Mind and Soul,

TOTUS TUUS - ALL YOURSALL YOURS