



Reflection from Patrick Marrin

Deut 6:2-6; Ps 18; Heb 7:23-28; Mark 12:28b-34

Early church theologian Tertullian wrote about Christians, “See how they love one another.” This visible expression of mutual love, even during times of adversity, not only fulfilled the Gospel but was also a source of evangelization. People were drawn to communities alive with God’s love expressed in service.

In today’s Gospel, a lawyer asks Jesus what the greatest of all the commandments was. Jesus recited the prayer all Jews say each day: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” This prayer was so central to Jewish faith, it was inscribed on scrolls placed in a small box posted above the door of the house, and even worn on the foreheads and arms of devout Jews.

All of Jesus’ teachings, and even his debates with his critics over laws and rituals, came down to love, the one thing necessary to faith in God and service to others. We can say that life today, for all its quarrels and divisions in both the church and society, ultimately comes down to the challenges of love.

This is a timely reminder for us at St. James because the Diocese has asked us to evaluate the health of our parish among the five parishes in our central city deanery. To meet this request, a parish-wide meeting will be held after Mass on Sunday, November 14, to reflect on the strengths and challenges we face. Please mark your calendars and stay tuned.

Criteria for this self-assessment will be made available online or as handouts in the coming weeks to help you prepare to participate. Along with data and numbers that describe our location in the city and our parish’s membership and activities are these Essential Elements of a Vibrant Parish: Community, Evangelization, Leadership, Service, Stewardship, Word and Worship.

St. James has shown resilience and creativity over the years that should allow us to report to the bishop that we are a community committed to faith and easily recognizable for our love for one another and our service to our Midtown neighbors.

Parishioners Pat Marrin and Joy Eke have been attending recent deanery meetings and will help run the session along with our Pastoral Administrator Ben Babaran. .

~ Peace,

Pat