The central theme of today’s readings is the greatest Commandment in the Bible, namely to love God and express it in action by loving Him in our neighbour.

A Sunday school teacher was teaching her class about the 10 Commandments in preparation for their First Communion.

After explaining the Commandment to “honor thy father and mother” she asked the class, “about the things money can’t buy. “It can’t buy laughter and it can’t buy love” she told them.

Driving her point home, she said, “What would you do if I offered you $1000 not to love your mother and father?” Stunned silence ensued.

Finally, a small voice from the back of the class queried, “How much would you give me not to love my big sister?”

In the Gospel, we heard that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And then it is followed by this You must love your neighbour as yourself.

The scholars of the law knew that there were 613 laws. So, they thought that it would be difficult for Jesus to determine which law among all of these is the most important.

Jesus, knowing their trickery, answered by quoting from the book of Deuteronomy (6: 5), “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*”  That fundamental, and often overlooked, central teaching of the Jewish faith is the first and great commandment, according to Christ.

But our Savior wasn’t done yet.  He added a second commandment “that is like it,” taken from the book of Leviticus (19: 18):, ”*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*.”  And He concluded that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Why is this commandment the first of all commandments? Because without love, all of the other commandments lose their meaning. Love – true love – gives life to and fulfills each commandment.

God doesn’t give us the people we want. He gives us the people we need – people who will hurt, insult, betray us, people who will leave us…, but also people who will help us and people who will love us, as to make us into the persons we were to be.

When we can see that, then we would have understood the lesson of life. And with that, we will be able to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.

So, what is it that we are commanded to do?  The call is to weep with those who weep.  To laugh with those who laugh.  To touch the untouchables, feed the hungry, welcome the children, release the captives, forgive the sinners, confront the oppressors, comfort the oppressed, wash each other’s feet, hold each other close, and tell each other the truth.  The call is to guide each other home.

The world now is too dangerous and too beautiful for anything but love.
May your eyes be so blessed you see God in everyone.

Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor.
May your hands be so blessed that everything you touch is a sacrament.

Your lips, so you speak nothing but the truth with love.
May your feet be so blessed you run to those who need you.
And may your heart be so opened, so set on fire, that your love, changes everything.

And may the blessing of the God who created you, loves you, and sustains you, be with you now and always.

Be Blessed and be a blessing. Amen.