October 26, 2014
30th Sunday of Ordinary Time:
“To know, know, know God is to love, love, love God”
Deacon Dave Snyder

GOSPEL READING – MT 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.”

HOMILY
Fr. Bob set the bar pretty high last week with his story about 2 guys stranded on an island, but I wanted to let you know about two young lads, Bobby and Joey.

Now, Bobby and Joey were best friends at church, but they both had a reputation for getting into lots of trouble. One Sunday, Bobby was home sick, but Joey, not wanting to let his friend down, was twice as naughty as usual.

As Joey was running wildly through the sanctuary after church, the pastor, a really huge man with a booming voice, caught up with him and said, “Where's God?! Do you know where God is, son?”

Joey was quite frightened and didn't know what to say. His mouth dropped open, and he made no response, just sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open.

The pastor continued, “I want you to go home and think about it and I don't want you to come back until you can tell me where God is.”

So, Joey hurried home and immediately called his sick friend on the telephone. “Guess what, Bobby,” he said. “This time, we are in BIG trouble, dude. They've lost God, and they're trying to blame that one on us, too.”

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So, this little humor suggests a good discussion point: Where is God, and likewise, Who is God, and maybe even, What is God? After all, Jesus tells us in today’s Gospel passage from Matthew that the greatest commandment – numero uno – is to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind. That’s everything we have, isn’t it – everything – so we are to love God with our whole self. There’s an older #1 song that’s been redone many
times through the years by several famous singers, that **to know, know, know him is to love, love, love him** – it wasn’t specifically meant for God, but think about it – unless we know this God – who God is, where God is, and what God is – then how can we really, effectively love God, how can we show our love for someone who we only have a vague idea of? I mean, if we really knew this God who we are to love … with everything we have … then why would we even consider skipping Sunday Mass to play golf, or sleep in, or to play soccer or hockey? If we really knew this God who we are to love with everything we have, our whole self, then why would we take God’s name in vain or even just say, O My God, or even, OMG? If we really knew this God who we are to love with everything we have, our entire being, then why would we replace God in our lives with false gods, such as pride, uncontrolled lust for power and/or money, drugs, or anything else worldly? Keep holy the Lord’s day, keep holy the Lord’s name, no false gods – the three God commandments in the Decalogue.

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So, how do we get to know more about our God … who and what and where God is? We can draw a parallel and say, for example, that you might be a Bills fan – I know there may be a few of you out there who will admit it, because, after all, they are having a winning season … so far. So, let’s say that you want to know more about the Bills this year. You’d want to learn everything you could about them, their styles, background, what they bring to the game, so to speak. You’d literally absorb news and sports reports, biographies, magazines, maybe even books. You can certainly attend a Bills game to learn something about your team – and you would learn something, but there would still be so much more to know, so much more to learn.

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So, likewise, you will certainly learn something about God by regularly coming to Mass, and paying attention to the words of the Creed, and listening to the readings and homilies, and see how they applied in biblical times, and how they can still apply in your own life today. And, similar to attending sports games, regularly attending Mass is a very important part of learning, and a necessary part, but just a part – there is so much more to discover, so much more to understand, about our God. And so we are encouraged to learn more by other means. We can learn about God by what God has done, and what God does, through reading and studying the Word of God, as recorded in the Bible. We can learn from prophets and saints through the years, as well as Church teachings, much of which is recorded in the Catholic Catechism and elsewhere. We can learn from Bible Study groups and other parish opportunities, courses at St.
Bernard’s or over the net from other Catholic institutions. We can learn from Catholic radio, CD’s and other media. There are so many opportunities, so all we need to do is start somewhere. One of the more amazing aspects from all of this is the realization that no matter how much we can know about our God, there is that much more to learn. And, with prayer to the Holy Spirit, we will find that we are prodding and encouraging ourselves to continue on even further, to keep on wanting to know even more about our God.

- Our God, who created us out of love, and wants us to share in that love with Him through all eternity.
- Our God, who is all-loving and all-merciful, whose love for us is non-ending, no matter what, and who is always ready to forgive our sins, if we only ask.
- Our God, who sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus, into the world to show us how much God truly loves us and to show us how to love and how to live.

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Empowered by further knowledge of God, and emboldened through prayer and gifts of the Holy Spirit, our love for God can continue to grow. We are transformed into messengers of God to help all others, to love all others, the second greatest commandment – to love our neighbor as our self.

So, how do we show love for God and how do we love our neighbor? Here’s a few examples, but I’m sure you can readily add to the list:

1. Election Day is rapidly approaching – look and vote for the candidates that best represent your Christian values, especially with regard to the importance of life, from conception to natural death;
2. One more week for this year’s 40 Days for Life – if you have taken a yellow sheet listing things you can do, please fill out the little pieces of paper and put them in the boxes at the entrances – if you have yet to start, please consider doing it this week;
3. Help someone else understand about God, and God’s love and mercy – maybe invite them to come to Church with you;
4. Take a look at all the people helped by the Catholic Ministry Appeal, CMA, each year and how you can help St Louis and the diocese continue this important work;

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