

August 22, 2025

Daily Reflections



MAKE ROOM

By Lucy Dominguez

Today's Gospel

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."

MATTHEW 22:34-40

Reflection

I've read this Gospel many times, but today it struck me in a different way. Maybe it's because love feels harder these days. It feels more complicated, and it's easier to be distracted from it. But here, Jesus cuts through all the noise. He's being tested again, but He doesn't flinch. He doesn't cite an obscure law or provide a lengthy explanation. He just goes straight to the heart of it all: Love God. Love your neighbor.

It's a simple answer, and yet incredibly challenging. This challenge became personal for me as I reflected on my upbringing and the values I hold.

When I was younger, I had a different understanding of love and neighbor. Church leaders taught that our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters were sick, had a disease, and were destined for hell. I didn't question it then; it was what I'd been told.

Then, one day, everything changed. I met an incredible couple, Oscar and Josué. They are now two of my closest and dearest friends. Through them, I began to see the world with new eyes. They weren't sick or broken. They were kind, faithful, generous, and loving. They were just like me -- people doing their best to live with integrity and faith. I began to see them through God's eyes.

Through their friendship, I came face to face with the pain and rejection they had endured. I also witnessed their strength, joy, tenderness, and fierce love. God flowed through them, just as God flows through me. Through them, I saw what it means to be a dear neighbor.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange speak often of loving the dear neighbor without distinction. This Gospel reminds me that we are not called to love those whom we think are deserving of it. Love is about allowing our hearts to be changed by encounters. It's about expanding our understanding of "neighbor" until it includes everyone. Especially those whom the world has excluded.

Oscar and Josué helped restore in me a love wider and deeper than I had ever known possible. They helped me see the divine image in every person and reminded me that following Jesus means always expanding the boundaries of who we're willing to call beloved.

Jesus did not respond with rules, but simply pointed to love.

And love, if it's real, makes room.



Petals in Heart Shape in Sand
Photo by How Far From Home

For Pondering

Ask yourself:

- Who have I been taught to exclude from the definition of “neighbor?”
What would it look like to love them without distinction?
 - When have I encountered someone who expanded my understanding of God’s love? How did that encounter change me?
 - In what ways is God inviting me today to see with God’s eyes, especially toward those who have been marginalized or misunderstood?
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For Prayer

To See with God's Eyes

*God of love,
You created each of us in your image,
beautiful, diverse, and worthy of dignity.*

*Open our hearts to love as you love,
without condition, without fear.
Give us the grace to unlearn what harms,
and the courage to embrace what heals.
Teach us to see our dear neighbor in every person,
in their pain, in their joy, in their sacred worth.*

*Thank you for the people who have opened our eyes,
who have shown us your heart by simply being who they are.
May we become instruments of your restoring love,
especially where the wounds are deep
and the welcome has been withheld.*

Amen.

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