

November 3, 2024



SHEMA, DIVINE INVITATION

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Reflection

*“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!
Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God,
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your strength.
Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.”*

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7

The Hebrew Scripture above forms the central belief of the Jewish faith. This prayer is part of the Shema and announces that God is ONE.

Christians believe that this affirms the doctrine of the trinity as taught in the rest of the Bible; Deuteronomy 6:4 teaches that GOD is a single, triune person. This prayer draws us into the mystery of God who desires to be in relationship with each one of us and all of creation.

The Shema is the morning and evening prayer focusing one's heart and soul on the primary relationship that guides one's life in God. The Shema is also the basis for the first of the two great commandments given by Jesus. After all, Christianity finds its origins in Judaism.

*"You shall love the LORD, your God,
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your strength."*

MATTHEW 22:32-38

God urges you and me to love God and Neighbor. God, who is LOVE, loved us first and invites us to be in an essential relationship with God to the exclusion of "false gods." Today there may not be the same idols of other gods -- but there is so much we need to be cautious of. What are the things today that draw me away from God? Prestige, power, wealth, "stuff," or whatever preoccupies my mind and heart. God loves me and does not want me to hurt myself by loving substitutes and false gods.

The spiritual journey invites me to be one in God. The Trinity: One God in three persons, is a mystery to be pondered, an essential tenet of Christianity, and offers me three ways to approach God. I seek to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus who shows me the Father, and to keep my heart in God's love. In any case, the essential question for us all is, **Do I love God?**



For Pondering

- What are the ways I have found to keep my heart focused on God?
 - What are the tell-tale signs of my love for God in my life?
 - What are the distractions that block God's love for me and mine for God?
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For Prayer

Read aloud the first part of the Shema. Replace the word “Israel” with your own name. Ponder its meaning. Rest in God's loving presence.

*“Hear, O [Israel]! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!
Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God,
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your strength.
Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.”*

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7

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