

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah tells us today "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Jesus tells us in the Gospel that the love of God is fulfilled precisely in as much as we love our neighbor.

For many in the Western World immigration is a difficult issue. Until recently, most western countries have been good in offering hospitality to people who have chosen to leave, or have had to flee their country of birth. Given our comparative wealth this hospitality is entirely appropriate. And it is also appropriate for our countries to have a threshold number for the sake of the common good.

In today's Gospel, however, Jesus does not promise us that the love of God and neighbor is going to cost us nothing. Jesus' law of love involves sacrifice for us individually and as a nation. Through the acceptance of this teaching we are committing ourselves to being our neighbor's keeper. In another part of the same Gospel, Jesus tells us that "those to whom much has been given, much will be required." Sadly, many of us want the good life for ourselves, while doing very little to help other countries become more livable, and then we can reject people who want to share in the blessings we have worked for and inherited.

The Gospel of Matthew gives us the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus being forced to flee Israel for Egypt as refugees. If the Holy Family were coming our way these days, they might be sent back to King Herod. May this Eucharist see in us a change of heart that enables our faith to act justly toward all people everywhere. May our goodness and hospitality mirror on earth the welcome we hope to enjoy from Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the kingdom which is promised to all, irrespective of where any of us has been born.

Fr. Eric T. Carpine, ofm