**Homily** **for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*Rev. Francis D. Kim*

Sometimes, our memory is so bad, and always we forget something. There is a story.

A couple in their 80’s were having problems remembering things, so they decided to go to the doctor for a checkup. The doctor tells them that they are physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember.

Later that night, while watching television, the old man gets up from his chair. His wife asks, “Where are you going?” “To the kitchen for a drink,” he replies. The wife asks, “Will you get me a piece of cake?” The husband says, “Sure.”

She gently reminds him, “Don’t you think you should write it down, so you don’t forget it?” He says, “No, I can certainly remember that.”

Then, the woman says, “Well, I’d like some strawberries on top. You’d better write it down because I know you’ll forget it.” The man replies, “I can remember that! You want some cake with strawberries.”

She adds, “I’d also like whipped cream on top. Now, I’m certain you’re gonna forget that, so you’d better write it down. Okay?”

Irritated, he says, “I don’t need to write it down, woman! I can remember that! Cake with strawberries! And, whipped cream!” He, then, grumbles into the kitchen.

After about 30 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment and says, “Where’s my toast?”

It happens sometimes. But, don’t forget why we are here today. Don’t forget. God has a plan for each of us, and there is a special call from God.
Each of us has a story of life, a journey to make, a call to answer that is uniquely our own. Our memory is not good sometimes, but don’t forget God’s love for us and His calling to love.

We are to love God and love our neighbor. This is our calling and our mission today. Loving God and loving neighbor. These two Commandments summarize all the other Commandments of God. So, Jesus said, “There are no other Commandments greater than these.” Loving God and loving neighbor.

You know? The religious leaders of Jesus’ day had more than six hundred man-made laws they were required to obey. The people couldn’t keep all those laws; it was impossible. Yet, the rulers believed that those laws had to be obeyed in order to win God’s favor.

But, Jesus summed up God’s laws with only two commands: “Love the Lord your God” and “Love your neighbor.”

The word ‘love’ is used to mean many different things. We say that we ‘love’ the car that we have just bought, or that we ‘love’ a particular vacation spot, or that we ‘love’ a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We also ‘love’ a certain television program, and we ‘love’ our family. Hopefully, you don’t ‘love’ your spouse the same way you love a peanut butter and jelly sandwich!

The greatest love of all is God’s love for us, a love that showed itself in action. That is real love. The Greek word for ‘love’ that Jesus used implies ‘action.’ It is not a passive word; it is an action word.

So, ‘love’ is not just a feeling; ‘love’ must be expressed in action. If it is not, we don’t have any reason to believe that love to be genuine, no matter how much that person claims it is.

Likewise, God’s love is not just a vague feeling or sentimental emotion hidden in His heart. God’s love is real, and we know it because He demonstrated it to us. He put His love into action!

Jesus Christ is the proof: He left Heaven’s glory and came down to this sin-infested world. He took our sins, and He died on the Cross. It is God’s love in action. This is true love!

We are to love our neighbors, Jesus said, even though they may have a different color skin, ethnic background, or language; even though they look different, walk differently, or act differently. We are to love by our actions. What will you do today to show God’s love by your actions?

Mather Teresa once said, “Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next-door neighbor. Let no one come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness; kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.”

“And, smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other, it doesn’t matter who it is, and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other.”

If we do not have love, we have nothing. If we spend our time in prayer but cannot show love towards our neighbors, we do not have true love in us, nor does God abide in us. For God is love and those who abide in love abide in God. The love of God comes first and the love of neighbor is firmly grounded in the love of God.

Jesus says today, “Keep the commandment of love. Then, you are not far from the Kingdom of God.” The Kingdom of God is as near as a neighbor’s shoulder. The Kingdom of God is as near as the humble awareness that our forgiveness is measured on how we forgive. The Kingdom of God is as near as an act of kindness!