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Commandment



Rev. Edmond D. Benard



A NEW COMMANDMENT

BY

REV. EDMOND D. BENARD

Assistant Professor of Sacred Theology at the Catholic University of America

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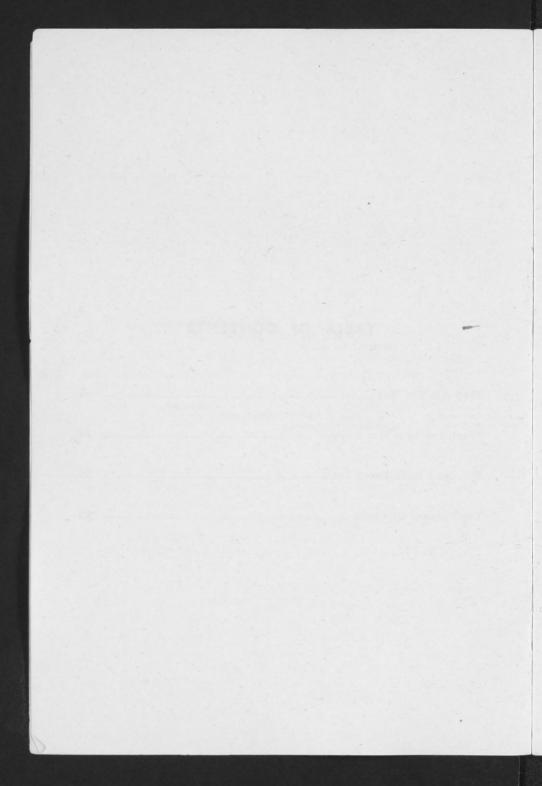
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*** JOHN FRANCIS NOLL, D.D.

Bishop of Fort Wayne

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THOU ART THE MAN

Talk given on November 4, 1951

My dear friends:

According to a fable written by La Fontaine, all the animals of the forest and jungle once gathered together in a great and solemn meeting. Jupiter, who had issued the invitations, called upon each of the animals to speak quite frankly. Every one was entitled to complain about any fault or failing, any imperfection or defect he had been burdened with by nature and wished to have repaired. Much Jupiter's surprise. single beast declared himself guite satisfied . . . with himself. But every single beast wished also to call to Jupiter's attention some truly shocking weakness or deficiency in some other beast.

La Fontaine's animals not only speak like us, they act like us as well. Like us, they are most clear-sighted regarding the faults of their neighbors. Like us, they are blind to their own. Like us, they have small love for any one or any thing except themselves. And like us they would never admit it, perhaps least of all to themselves.

This year I want to speak to you about the love of God.

The things I have to say are not easy to say; or maybe-I don't know-they are too easy to sav. I am afraid also that they are not easy to hear; or maybe, again, they are too easy . . . just to hear. I am not deliberately speaking in riddles, at least not any more than I have to; for when we speak about the love of God, we have to speak about the heart and soul of man -and man is not unfairly called "the glory, jest, and riddle of the world." It is easy, all too easy, to speak and hear about the love of God as if the words were meant for someone else, and not for us. It is not easy to speak and hear about the love of God in simple honesty, to look upon ourselves as in a mirror, to measure ourselves, not others, by the commandment Christ gave us-for ourselves.

Two years ago at this time on the "Catholic Hour" we thought together about Faith—the Faith, we saw, by which man lives more than he lives by bread. Last year the subject of our time together was Hope—the Hope that keeps us sure and firm in Christ, as an anchor holds a ship against the wind and wave. We come now in this November to the third and last of the great God-centered virtues, to the climax and summit of the Christian life, the virtue called charity. "Faith, hope and charity persist, all three," Saint Paul said, "but the greatest of them all is charity" (I Cor. 13: 13).

Now charity, as our Lord used the word, as Saint Paul used it. as the great teachers of the Church from the time of the Apostles used it, does not mean simply the gift of food and clothing and shelter to those whose need cries out to us. All these things are part of charity, signs of our charity, not the whole of it. Charity in its full and true and basic sense means simply love: the love of God above all things, and the love of our brothers in the world around us for the love of God. This is all it means: but all of our life, believe me, is summed up in its meaning. There is nothing that can take the place of charity; there is no substitute for love. We will not be judged by the fortunes we build or the honors we wear, by the things we have or the things we know. We will be judged by the things we love. Saint Paul really meant what he said to the Christians of Corinth: "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity. I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains. and have not charity. I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13: 1-3).

During the weeks to come we will try together, with God's help, to understand as best we can the meaning for us of those words of our Lord which are the supreme expression of the law of charity: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13: 34). Here, as we shall see, in this new commandment, love of God and love of our fellow men are bound together in that tremendous unity that we could never even have imagined if Christ our Lord had not lived and died for us. It is truly a new commandment given to us by Him who makes all things new.

Before we think about this

new commandment, however, we have to think about our own hearts; we have to find the answer—or try to find the answer—to the riddle that confronts us when we look into ourselves.

Like the eloquent animals of Jean de La Fontaine, we use a comfortable double standard of judgment. We carry a saddle bag slung over our shoulder; in the open front pocket, where we can see them, we carry the faults of our neighbors: in the other pocket, safely behind us, we carry our own. It is perfectly true, perhaps, that we judge everyone, ourselves included, according to a scale of excellence that runs from zero (or nothing) up to a hundred (or perfect). We use the same scale, but we do not use it in both cases in quite the same way. Everyone else we criticize to the extent that he falls below a hundred: with ourselves we are satisfied to the extent that we rise above zero. We are impatient with excuses for other people's failings; we are never at a loss for excuses for our own. We find it very easy simply to talk about charity. Why? Because it just does not occur to us that in every word we speak we judge ourselves, and in

every word we hear, we hear our own indictment.

For instance, I am sure that no one listening would refuse to admit that love of God and love of those around us as a rule of life is a high ideal-more than that, the only possible rule of Christian life, the only principle worth living by, the only guide that will not betray us in the end. But be careful, I beg you. Love of God and love of neighbor are not words to be lightly used, to be glibly spoken or nonchalantly heard. These words are not a sentimental commonplace. They cut to the vitals of our selfishness and pride like the cold and shining steel of a surgeon's knife. To pledge ourselves to live our lives by love of God and neighbor is not like taking a drug store sedative, but like submitting to a major operation. This is why it is not easy to talk about charity, or to hear about it, when we realize what charity means.

Did it ever strike you, in reading the Gospels, that our Lord gave us a standard for judging ourselves and others? It is a double standard, too. But it is exactly the reverse of the one we find, in our blindness, so comforting to our pride.

In the Gospel of Saint Luke

we read how the Master, knowing the thoughts of His hearers, and knowing how some of them rebelled in their secret hearts against His teaching, said to them simply: "He that is not with me, is against me" (Luke 11: 23). In another place in the same Gospel we read how the Apostle John came to Jesus and said: "Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." And Jesus answered: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against you, is for you" (Luke 9:49-50).

"He that is not with me, is against me."

"He that is not against you, is for you."

There have been some commentators who looked at these words of our Lord too quickly, and who saw (or claimed to see) a contradiction in them. But, of course, there is no contradiction. Christ has given us *His* double standard. When He tells us "He that is not with Me, is against me," He is telling us to look into our own hearts, to judge ourselves fairly, and honestly, and strictly. We can see into our own hearts, and we can know, if we

have the courage to face the facts, whether we are for Christ or against Him. On the other hand, however, when our Lord said "He that is not against you is for you," He was speaking, remember, to John concerning the judgment John should make about someone else. Christ is telling us, in effect, "God alone sees into another man's heart. You can not. You can only judge by outward appearance. Judge then in charity, and give to your brother the benefit of the doubt."

This is Christ's double standard; and it is a direct rebuke to the one we ordinarily prefer to use.

When I was thinking about this series of broadcasts, there sentence from the was Old Testament that constantly sounded in my mind. You remember, I am sure, the story of David and Bethsabee from the Second Book of Kings. David, King of Israel, became lost in the beauty of Bethsabee, wife of one of David's captains, Urias the Hethite. David took Bethsabee secretly into his palace, and Urias her husband he sent into the forefront of a suicidal attack on an enemy fortress. All worked out as David planned. Urias the

Hethite died fighting for his king.

Then God sent to David Nathan the prophet, and this is the story Nathan told. A rich man and a poor man. Nathan told the King, lived in the same city. The rich man had great flocks of sheep; the poor man had only one small lamb. A visitor came to the rich man's house, and the rich man spread a splendid feast before him. But instead of using a sheep from his own abundant flocks, the rich man seized the lamb the poor man cherished and slaughtered it and served it to his guest.

David listened to this tale of selfishness and brutality with growing wrath, and when it was finished he rose up in anger and cried: "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is a child of death." And Nathan said to him: "Thou art the man."

"Thou art the man." When we hear attacks upon our brothers, and hasten to join in them ourselves; when we sit in the chair of the Pharisee and raise our hands in horror at the rumor of our brother's fault; when we are tempted to condemn our brother by that stern and rigid rule we keep for others; then, then, if we are honest, we will hear in our own hearts the words of Nathan, words that are meant for us: "Thou art the man!"

If our eyes are opened as David's were; if we have something of David's greatness of soul; we can say, humbly, as David said: "I have sinned against the Lord." And Christ's new commandment will break like the dawning upon a new heart.

God bless you.

"THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER . . "

Talk given on November 11, 1951

My dear friends:

One day while the human race was still young in years but already old in evil, God said to Cain: "Where is thy brother Abel?" And Cain answered: "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" Then God said to him: "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth" (Gen. 4:9-10).

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

These words are not an innocent question; they are not even simply a poor excuse. They are hateful words, and death is in them, and man's history is bleak in their shadow. In hundreds of tongues, in thousands of forms, and millions of times; in accents sullen, defiant, revengeful, and cynical, they have sullied men's lips. And whenever, wherever, men say them, behind them the voice of a brother's blood cries out to God from the thirsty ground.

This is a sombre background against which to speak about charity, about the love of God above all things, and the love of our brothers for the sake of

God; but the love that Christ brought us to light up the world shines best against the dark. It was in the black hour of His betraval that our Lord gave us His last testament of love. While Judas Iscariot was hurrying through the night to a traitor's rendezvous-at that very time our Lord was saying to the eleven Apostles still around the Supper table: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you. that you also love one another" (John 13:34). This was truly a new commandment; in all the world's recorded history. words like these had ever been spoken before. It was also Christ's own commandment. particularly and entirely His. A few minutes later He repeated it, for there must be no misunderstanding or mistake. "This is my commandment," He said; -"This is my commandment. that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15: 12).

This week and next, we will try together, relying humbly on His help, to face in simple honesty what our Lord asks of us in His new commandment. It is not easy. But then, He never said it was.

I think that for today we should recall what Christ has told us about the love of those around us, our brothers under God. Now to speak of love of neighbor first does not by any means imply that love of neighbor can be separated from the love of God. Neither one can exist without the other, and there is no delusion more dangerous than to imagine that it can. Do you wish to have it said more bluntly? Then listen to Saint John: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother" (I John 4: 20-21). Saint Augustine too was faithful to his Master's teaching when he wrote: "Never sav-never!when you sin against your brother, 'I have offended only a man.' It is not so. When you sin against charity, you sin against God."

It is a sad commentary on the sincerity of our Christian profession that the basic obligation of the Christian life, the one our Lord most often emphasized, is

the very-one in which we most often fail. For a ribbon in his coat, for a handful of silver, for an acre of ground, a man will betray and attack his brother; sometimes, even, when there is no personal advantage to be gained, when the only motive is envy, he will try by calumny and by slander to destroy his brother's reputation. And yet, at least twenty times in the four Gospels Christ pleads with us, urges us, commands us to love and help and forgive and show mercy to our brothers under God. There is no other commandment-none whatsoever - that is repeated anywhere nearly so often. To take only one example, how could our Lord have spoken more plainly than in the great description of the Last Judgment in the tweney-fifth chapter of Saint Matthew? Here the Son of Man, the King of Heaven. Christ our Lord in the glory of His angels, says to the just standing at His right men hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you

visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me." Then the blessed ask our Lord in wonder, when did they do all this to Him? And He answers: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." The tone of judgment changes, and the Lord of justice turns to those on His left hand: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked and you covered me not: sick. and in prison, and you did not visit me." The same question is asked again, this time by those who may have saved, in the world, much time and goods and money by their lack of charity, but who have lost their souls: "Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison. and did not minister to thee?" Once again the answer is the same: "As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me" (Matt. 25: 31-46).

There are two things that strike us immediately about our Lord's foretelling of the Last Judgment. First: those who are

condemned are not accused of having gone out of their way to do positive harm to their brother, but simply of having refused to help him in his need. We do not satisfy Christ's commandment of love merely by going our own way through life, ourselves to ourselves, and ourselves for ourselves, "looking out for Number One," "paddling our own canoe," "refusing to fight other people's battles,"—and all the rest of the shoddy cliches in the vocabulary of selfishness. question Cain asked, and that we have asked so many times, is no escape. It has only one answer: "Yes. You are your brother's keeper!" Second, Christ's description of the Last Judgment is not so much remarkable for what it includes, as for what it leaves out. We are not astonished to have the Lord of Judgment insist on love of neighbor. But have you noticed that He insists on nothing else? Indeed, in the whole tremendous scene of judgment, He mentions nothing else.

What does this mean? What can it mean but that our love of neighbor is the touchstone and the index and the proof of all our faith, of our devotion, and of our service to Almighty God? "He that loveth his neighbor," Saint Paul wrote to the Romans,

"hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13: 9). If we seek the measure of our love of God, we need only ask ourselves an honest question, and have the courage to give ourselves an honest answer. Our love of God is in exact proportion to our love of those who share with us this earth God made. How do I love God? is the same question as, how do I love my neighbor? If we seek to know what we think of Christ, and how we treat Him, we need ask ourselves only what we think of and how we treat the least and the poorest and the weakest of His brothers and ours. These are tests that are easy to make. Do we dare, really dare to make them?

As we continue to read through the Gospels, we find that Christ has given us careful guidance on how to live our lives in love of neighbor. He has left nothing uncertain. He has left nothing to our whim or fancy. He has left nothing to chance. He has given us three things. The first is a warning; the second is a privilege; the third is a command.

First, the warning. It comes to us, as many of Christ's lessons do, in a parable. Our Lord once told his disciples a story about a king whose servant owed him

a great sum of money—ten thousand talents, about sixty million times the average daily wage in Gospel times. The servant could not pay the king, and the king had pity on him, and forgave him the whole enormous debt. When the servant who had just been forgiven through the king's mercy had left the palace he met a fellow servant-one who owed him money. The amount was relatively trifling- a hundred pence: only one six-hundredthousandth part of the debt the king had just forgiven. But now the tables were turned. The debtor had become a creditor. He brushed aside all pleas for mercy and had his fellow servant seized and thrown in prison until the last penny should be paid. When the merciful king had heard of this he called the first man back into his palace and spoke to him in righteous anger: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: Shouldst no thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?" And then the king revoked his forgiveness of the debt, and treated the wicked servant as his selfish heart deserved. When the parable was finished, our Lord said: "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" (Matt. 18: 23-35).

Has any one of us failed to recognize himself?

Have we failed to see our favorite excuse for lack of love demolished? We say to ourselves: "Well, I may have been a little bit uncharitable in such and such a case, if you want to be technical about it. But is was such a little thing, so unimportant, so-what's the word I want?-picayune. And anyway, I was within my rights, wasn't I? I had good reason, didn't I? I have to show people that they can't make light of me, don't I? Oh, but why should I bother to think about it, even? It was such a trifling, unimportant matter!"

This is what we say to ourselves. We may not say it in just these words, but we say it.

My dear friends, my brothers in Christ, the whole point of the parable is that the wicked servant acted uncharitably in a triffing, unimportant matter. He refused to forgive his brother servant when his king had just forgiven him in a matter six hundred thousand times as great. How could the lesson be clearer? As we treat our brothers in small things, so God will

treat us in the greatest. This is the warning.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also gave us a privilege. He invited us to pray to God to treat us at His judgment seat as we treat our brothers on the earth. The words in which we exercise our privilege are as familiar to us as our own name. They are in the prayer Christ gave us when one of His disciples begged Him: "Lord, teach us to pray." How often, how many times a day, a year, a lifetime do we plead with our Father in heaven to "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"? "Forgive us," we say, "in the manner, in the measure, that we forgive our brothers in the world." "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Unless we forgive our brothers for their faults against us, forgive them with a full and open heart, how can we nerve ourselves to ask God that He treat us as we treat them? How can we act in hatred and revenge, and speak to God as if we were acting in love? But this is our glorious and dangerous privilege: to fix and determine by our mercy towards others the mercy we dare to ask of Him.

A warning, a privilege, and at

last a command. The command, of course, is that we love one another as Christ has loved us. How has He loved us, and how must we love in turn? How are love of God and neighbor here

united in a divine simplicity that reflects the very unity of God? All this, God willing, we shall think about next week. Until then...

May God bless you.

". . . AS I HAVE LOVED YOU"

Talk given on November 18, 1951

My dear friends:

Some years ago, I saw for the first time the "Sand Hills" country of North Carolina. As every visitor there does, I suppose, I admired extravagantly the beauty of the magnificent long-leafed pine trees. I remember telling everyone who would listen that they were different, completely different, from any pine tree I had ever seen before.

After a few days in Carolina, I came back to Washington; and the first thing that struck my eye on the University campus, almost directly in front of the building I live in, and right beside a path I travel every day, was one of those same long-leafed pines.

It had not been planted while I was away, either. It had been there for years.

Probably most of us, at one time or another, have had much the same sort of experience—an experience that makes us realize that just to look at something does not mean necessarily that we see it. Sometimes the things we are most familiar

with are those of which we are least aware. It is possible, for instance—we spoke about this last week-to say the Lord's Prayer thousands of times, and not to realize what we are asking for, what we are committing ourselves to, when we ask our Father in heaven to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. I said it was possible. It must be possible that we just do not realize what these words mean, or we could not go on saying the Lord's Prayer and acting towards our brothers the way we do.

The same thing is true of the Gospels. We can read them over and over again; they can be, as they should be, part of our lives. And then suddenly one day a word or phrase will strike us in all its tremendous meaning, and we will discover that, although we have looked at it times without number, we have never really seen it before.

Often, during the past few weeks, I have felt that what I have just been saying is true for many of us about those wonderful words that make up our Lord's last testament of love. "A new commandment I give unto you," He said, "That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

First of all, what is "new" about this new commandment? Our Lord had spoken many times about the love of neighbor, far more frequently, in fact, than he had spoken about anything else. In the Sermon on the Mount, He had recalled the "Golden Rule"; while teaching in the Temple at Jerusalem. He had reminded us of the two great commandments of the Law. Why had He saved His new commandment for that Last Supper with His apostles on the night before He died?

I think we can understand the reason why, when we remember that the Son of God came to earth not only as our Redeemer, but as our Teacher too. He came not only to make the Kingdom of Heaven reachable, but to show us how to reach it. The last few days of Christ's life on earth are the climax not only of His work of redemption, but of His work as a Teacher as well.

Now Christ our Lord was a great Teacher, beyond compare

the greatest that the world has ever seen. He was a careful Teacher, and a prudent one. He knew that men must be prepared for truth, and that the higher and nobler a truth is, the longer and more difficult is the preparation to receive it. He knew too that a man's mind perceives the truth, but it is man's heart and will that act upon it.

This is why our divine Lord did not teach His people everything all at once. Gradually, patiently, He explained who He was and why He lived among us-the Son of God our brother and our fellow human being. Gradually, patiently, by His charity towards the poor, His mercy for the sinner, and His compassion on the sick and wounded of the world. He moulded and formed men's hearts. From the very beginning He acted and spoke as the Messias announced by the prophets, and with the wisdom and authority of the co-equal Son of God; but He made no general, startling public claims until He had taught His people carefully, by His words and His example, what the Messias' mission really was; until He had prepared their minds and hearts to realize that it was not strange or peculiar, but supremely and

divinely right that the Son of a village maiden and the foster-Son of a Nazareth carpenter should at the same time be the world's Saviour and the eternal Son of the most high God.

In exactly the same way our Lord made ready men's minds and hearts for the complete and perfect way of life and love He gave them on the night before He died — for His new commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us.

Early in His public life, in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said to the multitude gathered around Him: "All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Matt. 7:12). Now this is a rule and a good one. otherwise Christ would not have pronounced it; but it is a preliminary rule, and an introductory one; it is not His final and personal word. It appeals to our reason, to our human nature and human discretion. And it was not new. In its negative form, "Do unto no one what you would not have him do unto you," we find it in the writings of the ancient pagan Stoic philosophers; and we find a similar expression in the Old 'Testament. It is a logical rule, since all men have the same nature.

It is a discrete rule, since we should not expect other men to treat us any better than we treat them. It is a "Golden Rule," as far as it goes; but it does not go as far as Christ was to go and as far as we as Christians must follow Him.

Later on in His public life. towards the end of the last year, our Lord was approached one day in the Temple by a Pharisee, a doctor of the Law. Whether this man was fully sincere or not is difficult to sav. but at any rate he asked a clear and simple question: "Master. which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul. and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22: 35-39). Here too we have a rule of life, and a fuller and more perfect one than the "Golden Rule." Here the love of neighbor is bound up closely, as it must be, with the love of God. The first great commandment our Lord recalled to the Pharisee is part of that noble prayer of the Jewish people called the Shema. It was well known to our

Lord's hearers since it was repeated twice a day, morning and night, by every son of Israel grown to man's estate. The second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is found also in the Old Testament. Neither one could be called completely new. I say "completely" new for two reasons. First because some competent scholars believe it probable that our Lord was the first one in the history of His people to bind these two commandments so closely together; and second because our Lord did enlarge and broaden the horizons of his hearers, teaching them that by their "neighbor" was meant not only the members of their own family, tribe, or race, but also the strangers who dwelt in foreign lands, and even their hereditary enemies. So even the most familiar words of the ancient Law, when spoken by our Lord, took on a new and deeper and wider meaning from Him who makes all things new.

Now even the great commandment that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves is not the final and personal commandment of our Lord. He who came not to destroy but to fulfill the Law and the prophets was to fulfill beyond any human measure the law of love. The measure of love Christ gave us is not only the "Golden Rule" of doing to others what we would wish them to do to us; it is not only the great commandment to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We do not find Christ's measure in the pagan philosophers; we do not find it in the ancient Law. Christ's own commandment, the one that includes and fulfills and makes perfect all the others, is to love one another as He has loved us!

All this we are led to think about when we *see*, and do not just look at, the little word "new."

We see now too why Christ reserved His new commandment for the night before He died. Who could understand the meaning of Christ's love for us, until He had lived His life for us? Who could ever understand the meaning of His death upon the cross, unless He Himself had told us, in the same breath in which He gave us His commandment: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends"? (John 15: 13). To see the dying Christ on Calvary is to see not only what He has done for us. it is to see what He has commanded us to be ready and willing to do for Him. And remember too, remember, that what we do for the least of His brothers on earth — that is what we do for Him. The love that could say to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43), is the love that He expects of us. The love that could say about those who crucified Him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34)—that is the love He expects of us.

The love whose pain and cost is God's body dead upon a cross—that is the love He expects of us.

Please believe me, there has been no exaggeration in what has been said about the supreme obligation of Christian charity and the lesser obligations it includes. Saint John has said it in very simple words, and Saint John saw his Master live and die, and listened to Him when He taught. This is what Saint John said: "God has proved his love to us by laying down his life for our sakes; we too must be ready to lay down our lives for the sake of our brethren. And now, suppose that a man has the worldly goods he needs. and sees his brother go in want: if he steels his heart against his

brother, how can we say that the love of God dwells in him? My little children, let us show our love by the true test of action, not by taking phrases on our lips" (John 3:16-18). These words of the Beloved Apostle are so gentle and childlike that we have to look at them closely to see how they glow with the light and the fire and the flame of Christian love.

Once the Master has given us the proper master-key, all doors come open at our touch. Why, for instance, could Saint Paul say that "He that loveth his neighbor, hath fulfilled the law"? (Rom. 13: 8) Why did he not mention also here the love of God? Can a man love his neighbor without loving God?

Ah, but Saint Paul knew well that we cannot love one another as Christ wills us to love, unless we love one another in and for God. Why is no human motive sufficient? Because we love one another as Christ has loved us, and His love for us was not only human but divine. No human motive is strong enough to make us live, to make us willing to die not only for our friends and immediate family, but for the least of all Christ's brothers in the world. No human vision is clear

enough to see through the smoke of earth's battles, to pierce through veils of hate and iron curtains, and find among those who act as our enemies the souls Christ died to save. There is no other way to see all our brothers but through the eyes of God. We are allowed to hate no one: there is no one we can deliberately exclude from our charity, however a stranger, however afar. Humanly this is impossible; but all things are possible in God. In God. The love of one another Christ commanded is bound up with the very inner life of God. For our Lord has told us that we must love one another as He has loved us; and He has told us also that He loves us even as His Father in

heaven loves Him (cf. John 15: 9).

One final word. If anyone should tell you that to think as we have been doing together about the love of God and neighbor is "impractical," "remote from our daily lives," or "farfetched," do not believe him for an instant. Possibly within the next few minutes, probably within the hour, certainly within the day, every one of us will be faced with some choice - to speak or be silent, to act or not to act; and the choice we make will witness to God how real our charity is. May the Christ who loved us even unto Calvary help all of us love in turn.

God bless you.

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

Talk given on November 25, 1951

My dear friends:

On the twenty-fourth August, in the year 410, the barbarian armies of Alaric the Goth captured and plundered the city of Rome. It was the first great disaster in the long tragedy of the fall of the Roman Empire, and the news ran like an earthquake tremor through the world. For a thousand years Rome had been the triumphant symbol of earthly stability, power, pride; and even the bitterest critics of its luxury and corruption were shocked to see the Imperial City trampled in the dust. From far-off Bethlehem we hear the words of Saint Jerome: "A terrible rumor reaches me from the West, telling of Rome besieged, bought for gold, besieged again, life and property perishing together. My voice falters, sobs stifle the words I dictate; for she is a captive, the city that held the world in thrall."

In northern Africa, the Bishop Saint Augustine pondered long and deeply over a curious contrast: despite the power of its once mighty legions, Rome was falling; while the unarmed, defenseless Church of Christ lived on. Why was the one dying, why did the other live? These questions Saint Augustine answered in a book that was thirteen years in the writing, a book he called "The City of God."

"Two loves," he said, "built two cities. The earthly city was built by the love of self carried even to contempt of God; the heavenly city was built by the love of God, carried even to contempt of self. The earthly city glories in itself; the heavenly city glories in the Lord. . . In the one, the princes and nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and subjects serve one another in love. . . The one delights in its own strength, represented by the persons of its rulers; the other says to its God, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength."

Not long after Saint Augustine finished writing "The City of God," his own home city in Africa fell to the barbarian hordes. He lay on his death-bed while the Vandal armies were drawn up around the city walls.

Augustine died, and the city he lived in was destroyed; but his words did not die and they cannot be destroyed. As Cardinal Newman wrote of him: "His voice is gone out into all lands, and his words unto the ends of the world. He needs no dwelling-place, whose home is the Catholic Church; he fears no barbarian or heretical desolation, whose creed is destined to last unto the end."

For Saint Augustine, the City of God was both a symbol and a reality. As a symbol it was timeless; its citizens were all those who since the making of the angels have carried on the battle against the Prince of Evil for the love of God. As a reality, the City of God was that city of love that dwells in time and on the earth, and is known to men as the Catholic Church.

During this past month, we have been trying to understand together the meaning of that love of God and neighbor Christ gave us as a rule of life. "A new commandment I give unto you," He said at the Last Supper: "That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13: 34). We saw last week that to love one another as Christ has loved us means simply that we must be

ready to live and willing even to die for the least of Christ's brothers on the earth. We saw too that such love is impossible unless it is founded on the love of God.

Our Lord's new commandment is the key to many things. It opens up to us the meaning of His life and death for us; it unlocks for us the riddle of our own existence on the earth. It is also, I think, the key to an understanding of the Church Christ founded to be His living voice forever among men.

The Church is truly the City of God, and built by the love of God, as Saint Augustine wrote so many centuries ago. Had it been an earthly city, built by selfishness and lust for power, it would long ago have vanished in the mist of centuries, like the empires of Assyria and Babylon and Rome. Had the Church been an earthly city I would not now be speaking these words, nor would you be listening to them. There would be no "Catholic Hour," because there would be no Catholic Church.

The love that built, and builds today God's City is the love Christ had for us — that love for God His heavenly Father and love for us His fellow human beings that Christ com-

manded us to have if we presumed to use His name. The love by which the Catholic Church today works and lives, and in the blood of martyrs dies to rise again, is the love Christ had—and has!—for us. It is not a love like that of Christ, it is not an imitation or an echo of that love. It is the same love. In the love of the Church, Christ loves; in Christ's love, the Church loves.

Please let me explain what I mean, because it is very important. Unless we understand it, we cannot understand the Church.

Paradoxically enough, the Catholic Church would not be the City of God unless it were more, even, than the City of God. For the Church our Lord founded to be His heavenly city was to belong to Him in a manner far more intimate and wonderful than any city, even a heavenly one, could ever do. His Church was to be His own living body, in a supernatural and divinely mysterious sense. This is what we mean when we speak of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

Do we realize what it means, do we dare to face what it means, to be a member of the Church of Christ? Listen to what Saint Paul wrote to the Romans: "For just as in one body we have many members. yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another" (Rom. 12: 4-5). Here, too, is what Saint Paul wrote to the Christians of Corinth: "For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, many as they are, form one body, so also is it with Christ. . . And if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, member for member" (I Cor. 12: 12, 26-27).

Surely the meaning of all this is clear. Obviously the Church is not the human, physical body of Christ, which is present only in heaven, on His Father's right hand, and on earth in the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine. But the Church is Christ's body - as we said a moment ago-in a supernatural and mysterious sense. The members of the Church are bound together and act together as a human body acts; each member depends upon the others, and what affects one of them affects all. As the human mind directs and rules a hu-

man body, so Christ our Lord. the Head of the Church, directs and rules the members of His Mystical Body. And like human blood the grace of Christ courses through the veins and arteries. the sacramental channels that nourish His Mystical Body, the Church. This is why we are able to say, this is why we must say, that when the Church acts. Christ acts: and when the Church loves, Christ loves — not with a similar love, not with a parallel love, but with the same love!

Is it so very hard now, when we realize this, to love one another as Christ has loved us? When He gave us His new commandment, He did not leave us to shoulder its burden alone. He did not leave us orphans, without help, without a guide. He left us with a Church that is His body, with a living voice that is His own, with a work of love to do that is His work, with a life of love to lead that is the life He leads on earth.

I said unless we understand all this, we cannot understand the Church. Why does the Church teach, and insist upon its right to teach? Because Christ taught, and in His Church He teaches still. Why does the Church stand humbly yet fearlessly before the tyrants of the world? Because Christ so stood before tyrants, and in His Church He stands before them still. Why is the Church so merciful to unfashionable sinners, and so stern towards fashionable sins? Because Christ was merciful, and Christ was stern, and in His Church He is the same way still.

I shall not belabor the point by listing the Church's works of charity towards the poor and the sick and the unfortunate of every land. Our Lord once said: "The works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36). And in His Church He says the same thing still.

When we think about Christ's new commandment of love, we cannot help recalling the greatest gift of all He left us. We think about them together, because they go together. He willed to live in us, and willed that we should live in Him, in His Mystical Body the Church. But He did even more than that. On the night He gave us His new commandment—on that same night before He died, He willed and He accomplished that

the love by which His Mystical Body lives should find its vital center and its living food in His own body and blood, soul and divinity in the Blessed Sacramen of the altar. He took bread and blessed it, and said: "This is my body, which is given for you": and He took in like manner the chalice of wine and said: "This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." He said, too: "Do this for a commemoration of me." (Luke 22: 19; Matt. 26: 28). So, as He had promised, He gave to His apostles and through them to us forever, His body and blood as the food of eternal life.

When our Lord commanded us to love one another as He has loved us. He did not hide from us what that love means. "Greater love than this no man hath," He said, "that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13). In the Holy Eucharist, His body and blood, the body that was bruised and beaten for us and the blood that was shed for us, He gave us a commemoration for as long as the world shall last, of how He has loved us, and of how we must love in our turn. Remember what Saint Paul said about the Holy Euch-

arist? "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew forth the death of the Lord, until he come" (I Cor. 11: 23). Every moment of the day, in some corner of the world, the bread and wine of the Sacrifice of the Mass are changed into the body and blood of Christ. And every moment of the day, in great cathedrals, in village churches. and in the secret places hidden from the persecutions of a brutal century, there rests upon the altar the sacramental proof of how Christ loves us. Is it so hard, so very hard now, when Christ Himself comes to us in the Eucharist, to love one another as He has loved us?

The love He asks of us is stronger than death is strong, and wider than the world is wide. It knows no barriers of race or color: no oceans limit it. or rational boundaries; it embraces those who believe as we do, and those who do not: no man is a stranger, no man stands alone; all men are our brothers, because Christ died for all. And whatever we do, however small, for love of God and our brothers, helps in some way to show to the world the fullness of Christ.

And so, for you and me, another month together has come to an end. I have tried to recall to you - and to myself - a little of what Christ our Lord has told us about the love of God and of our fellow men. I am deeply grateful to you for listening: grateful to those of the Catholic Faith that in God's mercy is mine as well and grateful to those who do not share that Faith and of whose kindness and sympathy I have in many ways been made aware. No words of mine. I feel. would be a fitting close, but from the great heart of Saint Paul there comes a prayer for all of us:

"May Christ find a dwelling-

place, through faith, in your hearts: may your lives be rooted in love, founded on love. May you and all the saints be enabled to measure, in all its breadth and length and height and depth, the love of Christ, to know what passes knowledge. May you be filled with all the completion God has to give. He whose power is at work in us is powerful enough, and more than powerful enough, to carry out his purpose beyond all our hopes and dreams; may he be glorified in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, to the last generation of eternity. Amen" (Eph. 3: 17-21).

God bless you and goodbye.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . . *

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ; pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

127 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 42 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Alabama	Mobile Montgomery	WALA	1410 k
Arizona			1440 ke
Arizona	Douglas	KAWI	1450 ke
	Globe	KWJR	1240 ke
	Phoenix	KTAR	620 k
	Prescott	KYCA	1490 k
	Safford		1450 ka
	Tucson	KVOA	1290 kg
	Yuma	KYUM	1240 kd
California	Bakersfield		1230 kd
	Fresno	KMJ	580 kg
	Los Angeles	KFI	640 kg
	Los Angeles Sacramento	KCRA	1340 kg
	San Francisco	KPO	680 kg
	San Francisco Santa Barbara	KIST	680 kc
Colorado	Denver	KOA	850 ke
Connecticut	Hartford	WTIC*	1090 ke
District of Columbia	Washington		980 kg
Florida	Jacksonville		
101100			930 kd
	Miami	WIOD /	610 kg
	Orlando	WORZ	740 kd
	Pensacola	WCOA	740 kg
	Tampa	WFLA	970-620 kg
Georgia	Atlanta	WSB	750 kg
	Augusta	WINT	1230 kg
	Savannah	WSAV	1340 k
ldaho	Boise	KIDO*	1380 ke
Illinois	Chicago	WAAAO	670 kg
	Peoria	WFFK	1350 kg
Indiana	Elkhart	WTRC	1340 kc
	Fort Wayne	WOWO	1190 ki
	Indianapolis Terre Haute	WIRE*	1430 kc
lowa	Davenport	WOC*	1420 kd
	Des Moines	WHO	1040 kd
Kansas	Hutchinson	KWBW	1450 kg
	Wichita		1240 kg
Kentucky	Louisville	WAVE*	970 kc
Louisiana	Alexandria		
	Baton Rouge	WIRO	1400 kc
	Baton RougeLafayette	KVOI	1340 KG
			1340 kg
	Lake Charles Monroe	KNOE	1490 kc
	Nonroe	WICHE	1230 kg
	New Orleans Shreveport	KTBS*	1350 kc
Maine			
viuine	Augusta		1400 kc
Mandand	Bangor	WLBZ*	620 kc
Maryland	Baltimore Cumberland	WRAI	1450 kg
Managhungth			
Massachusetts	Boston		1030 kc
Alabiana			
Michigan	Detroit		950 kg
		WEALER	600 kg
	Saginaw	* WSAM*	1400 40
	Duluth-SuperiorHibbing	WEBC	1320 kg
Minnesota	Hibbing	WMFG	1300 kc
	Mankata	MYCAA	1230 kc
	Minneapolis-St Paul	KSTP	1500 kc
	Rochester	KROC	1340 kc
Montana	Billings Bozeman	KGHL	790 kc

127 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 42 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

	Butte	KCID	1370 kc
	Great Falls	KXLK	1400 ftc
	Helena	KXLJ	1240 kc
Nebraska	North Platte	KODY	1240 kc
	Omaha		590 kc
Navada	Reno		
			630 kc
New Hampshire	Manchester		1240 kc
New Mexico	Albuquerque	KOB	1030 kc
New York	Buffalo	WREN	930 kc
1011	New York	WNRC	660 kc
	New York Schenectady	WGY	810 kc
North Carolina			1230 kc
Horiti Carolina	Charlotte		1240 kc
	Raleigh		680 kc
	Winston-Salem		600 kc
North Dakata	Bismark	KEYD	550 kc
HOITH DUROIG	Fargo		550 kc
Ohio	Cleveland		
Ohio	Lima		1100 kc
	Toledo	WSPD#	1340 kc
	Zanesville	WHIZ	1240 kc
Oklahama			
Okianoma	Oklahoma City		930 kc
Oregon	Medford Portland	KMED	1440 kc
			620 kc
Pennsylvania	Altoona	WSAN	1470 kc
	Erie Johnstown	WEBG	1340 kc
	Lewistown		1230 kc
	Philadelphia		1490 kc
	Pittsburgh		1060 kc
	Reading	KDKA	1020 kc
	Wilkes-Barre	WRAW	1020 kc
	Williamsport		1340 kc
			1400 kc
	Providence		920 kc
South Carolina	Charleston		1250 kc
	Columbia	WiS*	560 kc
	Greenville		1330 kc
	Sioux Falls		140-1230 kc
Tennessee	Memphis	WMC*	790 kc
	Nashville		650 kc
Texas	Amarillo	KGNC*	1440 kc
	El PasoFort Worth	KTSM*	1380 kc
	Houston		820 kc
	San Antonio	WOAL	950 kc
	Weslaco	KRGV*	1200 kc
Utah	Salt Lake City	KVDI *	1320 kc
Virginia	Harrisophura **	N/SVA	
Virginia	Martinsville	WAVA	550 kc
	Norfolk	WTAR*	1450 kc
	Richmond		1380 kc
Washington	Spokane	KOMO*	950 kc
	Spokane	KHQ*	590 kc
Wisconsin	Eau Claire	WEAU	790 kc
	La Crosse	WKBH	1410 kc
	Marinette	WMAM*	3/6 4
Hawaii	Honolulu	KGU	/60 kc

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