

JUNE 26 2025, FATHER ERNIE DE CICCIO

The Law of Love

Our Gospel passage today is actually the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. I always remind people that the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus giving us His law—just as Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, Jesus now goes up the Mount of the Beatitudes to give the new law to His disciples: the law of love.

It's important for us to understand that when Jesus gives us the commandment to love, He's not just asking us to say words. He's calling us to embrace a way of life. We express our love through our actions.

That's why we hear these powerful words:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”

Plain and simple—our actions speak louder than our words.

This passage is sometimes even chosen for wedding Masses. We have a little booklet called *Celebrating Our Love*, and this is one of the readings couples can pick. It says a lot, because couples getting married are all about love—and hopefully, they'll tell each other “I love you” every day for the rest of their lives.

But saying “I love you” is not enough. It's not enough to send flowers or chocolates. Husbands and wives show their love through hard work, sacrifice, patience, understanding, forgiveness, and so much more. It's a way of life—not just words.

I like to tell the story of a talk show years ago. An old couple was interviewed—married for maybe 70 years. The host asked the man, “Did you tell your wife ‘I love you’ every day?” He said, “No! I told her on

our wedding day, and if I ever changed my mind, I'd let her know." Of course, he showed her every day through his faithfulness.

True love is not something we simply express in words. It's something we live. And it's not just married couples who need to do this—every one of us who is a disciple of Jesus Christ must live this way.

Love, especially the kind Jesus commands in the Sermon on the Mount, is the true expression of our faith. How can we claim to believe in God, how can we say we follow Jesus, if we don't live in love? Another word for love is charity. Are we doing good for others?

We can spend all day on our knees praying—and it is good—but it's not enough. Are we living charity? No matter how beautiful the novena, love must be our goal.

I'll never forget a clean-up day we had at the church. A whole group came out to help. One little lady was in the pews, praying. I went up to her and said, "Thanks for your prayers. Now here's a dust cloth. Put it to use." Maybe I was a little harsh—but again, it's not enough to pray. Love must be active.

Are we practicing charity? Are we getting along with each other? Some people have told me, "I don't want to go to church—those people pray inside, and then they fight as soon as they leave." And maybe that's a fair criticism sometimes.

Jesus gave us one commandment: to love. And we show our love by how we live—by our willingness to do good for others, to get along, even when people get on our nerves. We love because we are children of God. We are brothers and sisters.

So let's take to heart the teachings of Jesus Christ:
"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord...'"

Not everyone who says, “I love you...”

Let’s show it—by kindness.

Let’s show it—by patience.

Let’s show it—by understanding.

We all have jobs to do. But the most important job—the one we’ll never get paid for in this life—is the job of loving one another as Christ has loved us. He loved until it hurt. He never stopped.

And we, as His disciples, are called to do the same. me to us.