

Fr. O'Connor's Homily, November 4, 2018

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 all your strength.

These words, this prayer, is taken from the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy and is our first reading this morning. It is prayed by Jews three times a day. It is this prayer which is quoted by Jesus in today's Gospel.

Our own Christian roots are deep the Jewish religion and yet for centuries Christians have treated Jews terribly. The murder of 11 Jews in the synagogue in Pittsburgh a little more than a week ago has once again opened up the wound of Anti-Semitism in our own country. And of course, the vicious murder of more than 6 million Jews during the Holocaust by the Nazis during WWII was an unspeakably vicious outbreak of Anti-Semitism.

On the eve of WWII in 1938, Pope Pius XI declared to Catholics and the world, "Spiritually we are all Semites" and during Vatican II, the Church called the Jews our older brothers in the faith and declared that God has not revoked the covenant He made with the Jews.

Jesus repeats this same Jewish prayer in today's Gospel, "Here O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and all your strength." Today we must exercise this Commandment of love. Today we must extend our love and support to our Jewish neighbors.

Last week I mentioned that when I was growing up what wonderful neighbors the Jews were to us in our neighborhood. By the way, one of Bishop Scharfenberger's grandparents was Jewish and recently I learned that I am 1% Jewish.

Remember Jesus is Jewish, He is still Jewish. Jesus' mother Mary is Jewish as is St. Joseph, His foster father. The Apostles and St. Paul – Jewish. We open our hearts and our prayers to our Jewish brothers and sisters. We pray with and for them.

Now just to change our focus for one moment; Some time ago the Dallas Morning News carried a letter from a young woman. It was prompted by her mother's death. A part of it reads: Mom lived nearby. It would have been easy for me to drop in for a cup of tea and a hug. When I called Mom on the phone our conversation was brief and hurried. I feel ashamed when I think of the times I cut her short with, "Sorry I have to run." The world is filled with sons and daughters like me. I hope many of them will see this and profit from it.

So, love makes the world go round. Love is the reason we are alive. GOD IS LOVE.

We now celebrate the love of God, of Jesus, the Jew, in our Mass this morning.