

In the Gospel this week, a rich young man approaches Jesus and asks the most important question any human being can ask, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replies that the first requirement is to keep the commandments.

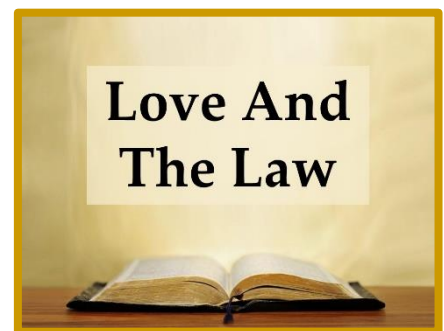
I recall a young man in a Catholic High School commenting, “Christianity is just a bunch of rules and regulations ... don’t do this ... don’t do that; I just want to have fun!” On the contrary, Jesus teaches us that there is only one law in Christianity: the law of love. This single law is lived out in two ways: love for God and love for neighbor. All the teachings of the Church, all the dictates of the law and prophets, are simply instructions on how specifically we are to follow this law of love. In a word: love fulfills the law.

Like the young man quoted above, we all “want to have fun.” At the same time, we all want to be fulfilled as human beings and ultimately inherit eternal life. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that human fulfillment sometimes requires hard

work, pain, and sacrifice – there is more to life than just “having fun.” In a word, human fulfillment requires sacrificial love.

Pope John Paul II wrote, “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.” *Familiaris Consortio*, #18.

Jesus teaches us a different way of understanding the “bunch of rules and regulations” taught by our holy Catholic Church. Behind each of these rules stands the person of Christ – perfect Love. Jesus, who created us in love, emptied Himself, suffered, sacrificed, and died because He loved us and wanted to save us from our sins. The moral teachings of the Church, all the “rules and regulations,” are in fact an expression of God’s love. Living in fidelity to the rules means living in accordance with love—it may not always be “fun,” but we have it on the highest authority, it is ALWAYS FULFILLING – even when it requires sacrifice!



Mother Teresa of Calcutta knows a thing or two about sacrificial love, she says, “My prayer for you is that you may grow in holiness through love for one another—for where there is love, there is peace.... And if there is peace, there is joy. So, keep the joy of loving one another in your hearts, and share this joy with all you meet.” All I can add to this is: AMEN!

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples