



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.

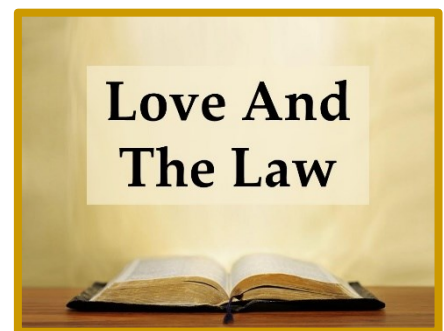
Like the young man quoted above, we all “want to have fun.” At the same time, we all want to be fulfilled as human beings and ultimately inherit eternal life. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that human fulfillment sometimes requires hard work, pain, and

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



Saint Hedwig of Silesia

Feast Day: October 16

Born: 1174

Died: October 15, 1243

Canonized: March 26, 1267 by Pope Clement IV

Hedwig, the daughter of a 12th-century count, was educated in a monastery in Eastern Europe. At age 12, she married Henry I of Silesia (now southern Poland), who was 18. In the 1200s, this was the usual age for marriage. The couple had seven children.

Despite her youth and the challenges of her position, Hedwig quickly demonstrated a profound commitment to serving others and living a life of faith. Her marriage to Henry proved to be a partnership rooted in shared values and a mutual desire to use their privileged position for the betterment of their subjects. When Henry succeeded his father to the throne, he depended on Hedwig to help him rule.

In a war with Conrad of Masovia, Henry was captured. With rare courage, Hedwig persuaded Conrad to return her husband. The gentle queen was loved more for her kindness to those who were poor than for her political undertakings. She founded a hospital for lepers. The doors of her castle were open to travelers and to those who were homeless, sick, and dying. Hedwig went to the cottages of those who were poor, visiting and serving them. Late at night she would darn their clothes. Early in the morning, Hedwig would pray for the kingdom. She did all this while taking good care of her own family. Hedwig also provided endowments to build monasteries, hospitals and churches in the kingdom. Following her husband's death, Hedwig immediately joined the Cistercian nuns, fully embracing a life of simplicity and devotion.

Saint Hedwig's life was characterized by her extraordinary acts of charity and compassion. She dedicated herself tirelessly to caring for the less fortunate, often performing these charitable tasks herself despite her noble status. Her compassion extended to all members of society, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Hedwig suffered when two of her sons disagreed over land given to them by Henry and went to war against each other. She bore this sorrow and the death of her son Henry with patience. The people of her kingdom considered her a living saint.

Reflection: Saint Hedwig's life serves as a powerful reminder of the impact one person can have when they dedicate themselves to serving others. Her charitable works, compassion, and humble leadership continue to inspire people centuries after her death. Her example challenges us to consider how we can use our own resources and influence, however great or small, to make a positive difference in the lives of others. In a world often characterized by self-interest and materialism, Saint Hedwig's life reminds us of the enduring value of selflessness and compassion.