



THIRD SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

DATE: October 21, 2018 (World Mission Sunday)

THEME: Love is the Answer

READINGS: Is 53:10-11 / Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22 / Heb 4:14-16 /
Mk 10:35-45

REFLECTION BY: Conegundo B. Garganta

Love is the Answer

Conegundo B. Garganta

In the past months, many of our conversations, personal and public, have been overshadowed by deep grief, speculations and concerns about the latest headcount of gun shootings in various places. There are attempts to try to figure out in what place the next bullet will hit its target, and sadly: Who it is going to be? How young? How old? Poor or rich?

These deaths reflect a storm of forces for and against a whole range of issues, rolled together into one ball of wax: human, cultural and religious settings foreign to the Gospel of Jesus and to the sacramental presence of the Church. They represent the extreme peripheries, the “ends of the earth,” to which Jesus’ missionary disciples have been sent, along with the certainty that their Lord is always with them (cf. Mt 28:20; Acts 1:8). It is quite likely that you, too, have a strong opinion and deep-seated feelings around these issues. The only thing I know for sure is that you are absolutely right, as every person involved in a discussion is right. Regardless of the facts and opinions involved, there is no one truth to be found at the level of political, social, legal or economic action, reaction or discussion.

To be engaged in the Church’s mission is to go to the desolate peripheries where humanity, in need of Christ, remains indifferent to the faith or even shows hatred for the fullness of life in God. All material



and spiritual poverty, every form of discrimination against our brothers and sisters, is always a consequence of the rejection of God and his love.

It is stating the obvious, to say that love is the answer to the world's problems. However, love is not an easy thing to grasp today as we use the word in so many different contexts; often it is difficult to focus on its truest meaning, which is an unconditional commitment to the well-being of other persons.

This is not to say that we ourselves have always been the best possible witnesses to such selfless love. The reality of the many deaths before us directly contradicts this message. However, to be set afire by the love of Christ is to be consumed by that fire, to grow in understanding by its light, and to be warmed by its love (cf. 2Cor 5:14). At the school of the saints, who open us to the vast horizons of God, I invite you never to stop wondering: "What would Christ do if he were in my place?"

Jesus calls all who follow Him to recognize that the most fundamental expression of our faith is the call to love God by loving one another. If we fail in this, we fail to be faithful to the Gospel as He proclaimed it. This is the challenge that stands before us every day of our lives—to give witness to God's love. Never think that you have nothing to offer or that nobody needs you. Many people need you. Live your mission and vocation to love.



Father Conegundo B. Garganta is the Executive Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Episcopal Commission on Youth.

“No more war, war never again! Peace, it is peace which must guide the destinies of people and all humanity.... If you want peace, work for justice.”

Paul VI

