

Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed. As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (150).*

One cannot honour another person without blessing God his creator. One cannot adore God without loving all men, his creatures.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (2069).*

### Love of God and love of others

Jesus was once asked the question, 'What is the greatest commandment?'. This is a very difficult question to answer and most Catholics would probably answer with the words of Jesus which are based on *Deuteronomy* 6:5.

**"This is the first: 'Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, is the one, only Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

(Mark 12:29-31).

So the supreme Christian value is love, love of God and love of others. People achieve their destiny as human beings by loving God above everything. This means that human values should take second place for Christians. It is God's values which show Christians how to live their lives and they do this by loving God (by worshipping him and by being a member of his Church), and by loving others.

Christians are to love others as Jesus explained when a scribe asked him what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked the scribe what the Jewish law said. The scribe used the same words from *Deuteronomy* Jesus used to answer the question about the greatest commandment, and Jesus said that he had answered correctly. However, the scribe asked Jesus to explain what it meant to love your neighbour. Jesus explained with the **parable of the Good Samaritan**. In this parable Jesus showed that your neighbour is anyone who is in trouble or needs your help regardless of their race or religion (see *Luke* 10:25-37).

In another **parable, the sheep and the goats**, Jesus explained that Christians will be judged on the Last Day on the basis of how they have helped those in need. There are examples in the parable: giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothes to the naked, welcoming the stranger and visiting a person who is sick or in prison. Those who have done such things are surprised to be told, 'As you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me.' These people are blessed and receive their reward in heaven. Those who did not know that by refusing to help people in need they were refusing to help Jesus are shocked; they are cursed and receive their punishment in hell. The punishment is not for doing wrong, but for failing to show love for God by loving other people.

Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation. Jesus identifies with the poor of every kind and makes active love towards them the condition of entering his kingdom.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (544).*

## QUESTIONS

### Factfile 5 God the Father

- 1 What does the Apostles' Creed say about the nature of God?
- 2 What do Christians believe about God's creation?

### Factfile 6 Jesus

- 1 What does the Apostles' Creed say about Jesus?
- 2 "Jesus was just a special man." Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing you have considered another point of view.

### Factfile 7 The Holy Spirit

- 1 What do Christians believe is the role of the Holy Spirit?
- 2 Name three symbols for the Holy Spirit.
- 3 What do Christians mean by the Trinity?

### Factfile 8 Sin and Salvation

- 1 What other beliefs are there in the Apostles' Creed?
- 2 "You don't need to be a Christian to lead a good life." Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer showing you have considered another point of view.