



■ † Second Sunday of St. Luke

**Within Us, in Our Hearts,
Should Be Our Neighbor
Instead of Our Own Selves ***

The **fundamental** and original commandment is “love”!

It is a small word, but it expresses an all-encompassing thing. It is easy to say that you must love, but it is not easy to attain love to the necessary degree.

It is also not exactly clear how to attain it; this is why the Savior surrounds this commandment with other explanatory rules: “Love thy neighbor as thyself”(St. Matthew 19:19); and “as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (St. Luke 6:31).



Here is shown a degree of love that one can call boundless; for is there any limit to one’s love for oneself? And is there any good that one would not want for himself from others?

This injunction is not impossible to fulfil. It depends upon having perfect compassion for others, in order fully to transfer their feelings to yourself, to feel the way they feel.

When this occurs, there will be no need to point out what you must do for others in a given situation: your heart will show you. Only take care to maintain compassion, otherwise

egoism will immediately approach and return you to yourself and confine you within yourself. Then you will not lift a finger for the sake of someone else, and will not even look at him, though he might be dying.

When our Lord says “love thy neighbor as thyself,” He means that **our neighbor instead of our own selves should be within us, that is, in our hearts.** If our “I” remains there as before, we cannot expect anything good to come of it.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*