



Guidelines for Prayer

HOW CAN I GIVE YOU UP?

(Hos 11:8)

Week III

Nov 18-24, 2019

General Theme: God's Merciful Love

General Objective: To experience the joy of God's unfailing love and forgiveness that impels the person to desire to live and start anew, with the heart filled also with mercy for others.

Objective of the week:

To discover the joy of God at the conversion of the child as one comes back to him.

INTRODUCTION

God, in his great merciful love, has opened the gates of heaven for us to enter. He has never given up in forgiving us. What can still keep us from experiencing his gift of forgiveness?

We are special creations of God, He created us because He loves us. His heart pains when one of his children hurts and suffers. This is why he keeps his eyes on us wherever we may be. Sometimes, we forget how much He loves us and we do our own ways that keep us away from Him; yet, he makes interventions for us to return to Him. To confirm how much He loves us, He sent Jesus Christ, His son, to reveal the His mercy on us. Through Jesus, His mercy flows for it is not easy for Him to give up His children, for it is not His nature to condemn because He is love. Since it is His very nature to love, we have also inherited his same nature. However, we are intervened by the strong temptations from outside forces of the world that we betray God. As God cannot afford to give up on us, all the more we, too should never give Him up for we will consequently lose and live in sin that can only completely separate us from Him. We will become sheep without a shepherd. In the story of the Good Shepherd, Jesus left the ninety-nine to find the lost one and

when He found it, there was a great joy in heaven. Let us not abuse the abundance of His love and mercy for it is gratuitously given to be enjoyed as long as we live.

MONDAY

(Dedication of the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul)

You belong to the Kingdom

Mt 13:36-43 ³⁶When Jesus had left the crowd and gone indoors, his disciples came to him and said, "Tell us what the parable about the weeds in the field means." ³⁷Jesus answered, "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world; the good seed is the people who belong to the Kingdom; the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One; ³⁹and the enemy who sowed the weeds is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvest workers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire, so the same thing will happen at the end of the age: ⁴¹the Son of Man will send out his angels to gather up out of his Kingdom all those who cause people to sin and all others who do evil things, ⁴²and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will cry and gnash their teeth. ⁴³Then God's people will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Listen, then, if you have ears!

What a depth of God's merciful and patient love! With hearts full of love, He continue to sow goodness in our hearts that we may spread it. This gospel reminds us how can we use our life and invites us to see what kind of life we are living now. Let us then ponder how we spend our life each

day. Do we spend it like the weeds that grow in the field without a purpose? Or do we end the day fruitless and have done nothing for others because we have ignored Christ first to fulfill our own desires? Yet, with our reality, it brings comfort to know that God's mercy will never abandon us even in our weakness.

Today, we are called to entrust ourselves to the mercy of God that is beyond our comprehension. Let us be renewed by His mercy.

How this passage of today leads me to a deeper experience of His merciful love?

TUESDAY

Calling the Outcast

Mt. 9:10-13 While Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and other outcasts came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. ¹¹Some Pharisees saw this and asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such people?" ¹²Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. ¹³Go and find out what is meant by the scripture that says: 'It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices.' I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts."

God's love is inclusive. Jesus' life is exactly a complete definition of love. Mercy is an extension of Love - a love that covers not only the righteous ones but also the multitude of sinners.

Often, we associate "mercy" with pardoning. Yet, in the Bible, it holds a deeper meaning as it refers to a tender, compassionate love that has

special concerns for the sufferings of others.

How do I experience His love today?

WEDNESDAY

I can't condemn you

Mt 13:27-30 The man's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, it was good seed you sowed in your field; where did the weeds come from?' ²⁸ 'It was some enemy who did this,' he answered. 'Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?' they asked him. ²⁹ 'No,' he answered, 'because as you gather the weeds you might pull up some of the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let the wheat and the weeds both grow together until harvest. Then I will tell the harvest workers to pull up the weeds first, tie them in bundles and burn them, and then to gather in the wheat and put it in my barn.'"

Within us, we all have the weeds and the wheat growing together. Often, we focus more on the weeds and we forget that we are created to be a good wheat. We are invited today to keep on working to be a good wheat, trusting that God is working with our frailties and limitations. The nature of God is to save not to condemn. The gate of heaven is wide open for us to enter; that is why He always gives us the chance to change our ways. He never gets tired and never gives up hope on anyone. However, we should never abuse His love, and never be complacent. Rather, while we are still in this world, let us enjoy this opportunity to experience God's forgiveness & mercy, to humble ourselves & do whatever He desires

for us; for what He truly desires in our eternal life.

How can I continue to keep growing and focus to be a good wheat? What are the weeds I have within me that I can offer and surrender to God?

THURSDAY

(Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Fruit of Forgiveness

Hos 14:4-8 The Lord says, "I will bring my people back to me. I will love them with all my heart; no longer am I angry with them.⁵ I will be to the people of Israel like rain in a dry land. They will blossom like flowers; they will be firmly rooted like the trees of Lebanon.⁶ They will be alive with new growth, beautiful like olive trees. They will be fragrant like the cedars of Lebanon. Once again, they will live under my protection. They will grow crops of grain and be fruitful like a vineyard. They will be as famous as the wine of Lebanon.⁸ The people of Israel will have nothing more to do with idols; I will answer their prayers and take care of them. Like an evergreen tree I will shelter them; I am the source of all their blessings."

Our God, out of His mercy always give us a chance to change and to have and enjoy a new life. God has promised us eternal life and He never fails on this.

Thus, it pains Him when someone goes astray. If God can't afford to leave us, we too should not leave Him, but fix our eyes on Him, for He is our real joy, life and our final destiny. We don't need to allow ourselves to be

interrupted by the evil forces for we will become sheep without a shepherd. Fixing our eyes on Jesus is to strive to live an upright life and persevere the trials and sufferings in our journey.

Do I give myself a chance to let God work his promises in me?

FRIDAY

(St. Cecilia, Virgin & Martyr)

An immeasurable love

Ps 117:2 His love for us is strong, and his faithfulness is eternal. Praise the Lord!

1 Cor 13:7 Love never gives up.

The love of God for us is so strong and immeasurable. He forgives and forges all our transgressions if we come to Him with a contrite heart. His love does not only cover forgiveness but also healing. He heals and renews us that no trace of sin is seen in us because love does not keep a record of wrong. It is not happy with evil but rejoices in the truth. (1 Cor 13::6)

How does the Word of God change the perspective that I have of His love? Am I convinced that I am loved by God?

SATURDAY

(St. Clement, Pope & Martyr)

Let us celebrate!

Luke 15:20-24 "He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said,

'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so, the feasting began.

Tomorrow we end our liturgical calendar with the feast of Christ the King and will start anew our journey. God is reminding us that the journey is not easy. As we travel, we need the mercy of God to be strong against temptations, against the distractions we find along in our journey of faith. "Mercy is the true force that can save man and the world from the cancer of sin, from moral and spiritual malaise.

Only love can fill the gaps, the negative abysses the evil opens up in our hearts and in history. Only love can do this, and this is the joy of God (Pope Francis)

How am I invited to rely on God's merciful?

SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

1st Reading – 2 Sam 5:1-3

Resp. Psalm – Ps 122:1-5

2nd Reading – Col 1:12-20

Gospel – Luke 23:35-43