

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A few years ago, Pope Francis, shared some meditations on mercy, in *Misericordiae Vultus* (The face of Mercy). Reflecting on the Gospel of today's Mass, he said:

“In the parables devoted to mercy, ...we find the core of the Gospel and of our faith, because mercy is presented as a force that overcomes everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon.

In reply to Peter's question about how many times it is necessary to forgive, Jesus says: “I do not say seven times, but seventy times seven times” (Mt 18:22). He then goes on to tell the parable of the “ruthless servant,” who, called by his master to return a huge amount, begs him on his knees for mercy. His master cancels his debt. But he then meets a fellow servant who owes him a few cents and who in turn begs on his knees for mercy, but the first servant refuses his request and throws him into jail. When the master hears of the matter, he becomes infuriated and, summoning the first servant back to him, says, “Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” (Mt 18:33). Jesus concludes, “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (Mt 18:35).

This parable contains a profound teaching for all of us. Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father, it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who his true children are.

In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offences becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves.

At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostle's exhortation: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26). Above all, let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

As we can see in Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible. Love, after all, can never be just an abstraction. By its very nature, it indicates something concrete: intentions, attitudes, and behaviors that are shown in daily living. The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible; that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other”.

Fr. Sean