
Mercy Evening

Hymn – Waves of Mercy

† A beautiful prayer

“God, be merciful to me a sinner”

The Pharisee stood in the temple and prayed using many words. His was a prayer of thanksgiving to God, but it is really just a display of his own merits, with a sense of superiority over other men, whom he describes as ‘extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even,’ for example, referring to the other one there, ‘like this tax collector’. But this is the real problem: that Pharisee prays to God, but in truth he is just self-laudatory. Instead of having the Lord before his eyes, he has a mirror. He is praying to himself!

He doesn’t feel the need to prostrate himself before the majesty of God; he remains standing, he feels secure, as if he were the master of the temple! He lists all the good works he has done: he is beyond reproach, observing the Law beyond measure, he fasts ‘twice a week’ and pays ‘tithes’ on all he possesses. Yet, his attitude and his words are far from the way of God’s words and actions, the God who loves all men and does not despise sinners. On the contrary, this Pharisee despises sinners.

Instead the tax collector presents himself in the temple with a humble and repentant spirit: ‘standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast’. His prayer was very brief, not long like that of the Pharisee: “God, be merciful to me a sinner”. Nothing more. A beautiful prayer !

Humility is the necessary condition to be raised by God, so as to experience the mercy that comes to fill our emptiness.

Hymn – God Mercy and Compassion

† The Blanket of Mercy

God looks for the *desire for forgiveness* in the heart of the penitent. This desire is the fruit of the grace of God’s action. There is an aspect which is seldom mentioned: *shame*. It is not easy to open ourselves before another person. So often shame silences us. From the very first pages the Bible speaks of shame: after the sin of Adam & Eve.

In the Bible Noah is considered a just man; even though he is not without sin: his drunkenness helps us understand how weak even he was, to the point of failing in his own dignity, a fact which Scripture expresses with the image of nakedness. As Noah was lying naked on the street, two of his sons Shem & Japheth, take his garment and cover him so as to restore their father’s dignity (cf. Gen 9:18-23).

This passage makes us think of the important role of the Sacrament of Reconciliation(Confession). In the confessional before God is a person who is “naked”, a person who is unable to speak and does not know what to say, with his/her weaknesses and limitations, with the shame of being a sinner and often unable to express it. Before God there is *a contrite sinner*, a sinner who does not want to be like this but who cannot help it. A person who is anxious to be heard and forgiven in this Sacrament of Confession.

The priest acts like Shem and Japheth, the sons of Noah, who took a garment to shield their father from shame. Pope Francis beautifully says that being a confessor in accordance with the heart of Christ is the equivalent of shielding sinners with the *Blanket of mercy*, so that they may no longer be ashamed and may recover the joy of their dignity.

Hymn – Amazing Grace

Divine Mercy demands Mercy

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant. (Mt 18:21-35)

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from the heart.”

We often treat others with harshness and cruelty. Sometimes they are the people close to us... God has forgiven us but we hold grudges against classmates or friends; we gossip...

Examples of Mercy: Jesus Christ, Mary Mother of Mercy

Hymn – Blessed are the Merciful

Reading – Luke 7:36-50

“A Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him,
and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.
Now there was a sinful woman in the city
who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee.
Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment,
she stood behind him at his feet weeping
and began to bathe his feet with her tears.
Then she wiped them with her hair,
kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.
When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself,
'If this man were a prophet,
he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him,
that she is a sinner.'
Jesus said to him in reply,
'Simon, I have something to say to you.'
'Tell me, teacher,' he said.
'Two people were in debt to a certain creditor;
one owed five hundred day's wages and the other owed fifty.
Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both.
Which of them will love him more?'
Simon said in reply,
'The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven.'
He said to him, 'You have judged rightly.'
Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon,
'Do you see this woman?
When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet,
but she has bathed them with her tears
and wiped them with her hair.
You did not give me a kiss,
but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered.
You did not anoint my head with oil,
but she anointed my feet with ointment.
So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven
because she has shown great love.
But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'

He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'
The others at table said to themselves,
'Who is this who even forgives sins?'
But he said to the woman,
'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"

Footprints of Mercy

† Eyes of Mercy

† We see pain, suffering.... we see people turning away from God... we speak to ourselves like Simon the Pharisee who was looking at the woman with condemning eyes. How do we look at others?

† We need eyes of mercy... Look with the eyes of Christ.

Imagine the eyes of Jesus looking at Peter after his denial. They were eyes of mercy.

Recollect looking into the eyes of someone suffering, in need of help.... What do those eyes tell you now?

† Ears of Mercy

Listening is never easy. Many times it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says. It involves a self-sacrifice, as we try to imitate Moses before the burning bush: we have to remove our sandals when standing on the "holy ground" of our encounter with the one who speaks to me (cf. Ex 3:5). Knowing how to listen is an immense grace, it is a gift which we need to ask for and then make every effort to practice. Like Martha we are worried about so many things that we fail to listen like Mary (Lk 10:38-42).

† See the confusion around us... Nobody listens

† Nobody listened to what the woman was going through as she washed the feet of Jesus. She did not even speak. Though she did not speak a word, Jesus listened to her.

† People may not even speak but let me listen like Christ...

Think of anytime when you were in distress, trouble, worried did someone listen to you with compassion?

How have you given a listening ear to someone ?

† Words of Mercy

As people passed by engrossed in their thoughts the blind man sat by the roadside and cried out 'Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me' (Mark 10:47). For the blind man in the Gospel, and for many of us today, our streets, our cities become a 'place of solitude'. In the case of the blind man, 'large crowds pass by ... and he was alone.' The crowd in fact tried to silence the blind man sitting by the roadside crying out to Jesus, as if he had no right to speak. How often do we feel annoyed – when we see so many people on the street — people who are needy, sick, who have nothing to eat — our own family members who have their own weaknesses. How many times, when we are faced with so many poor and displaced persons, do we feel annoyed? It is a temptation that we all have. All of us !

Rediscover the power of mercy to heal wounded relationships and to restore peace and harmony to families and communities. Only words spoken with love and accompanied by meekness and mercy can touch hearts.

How can you bring about healing in your relationships with family, friends, colleagues and even enemies. How do you plan to speak with love?

† Touch of Mercy

We have examples of touch: Jesus took the little girl by the hand and she was restored to life. The woman suffering from haemorrhage touched the cloth of Jesus and she was healed (Mt 19:18-26).

Like the woman who washed the feet of Jesus we need to go down on our knees... touch Jesus... feel Jesus and be filled with love. It's our duty to pass this touch of mercy and love to others in our family, community and society. It could be just saying a kind word to someone, encouraging someone, smiling at someone....

Hymn – Mercy is Falling

† Footprints of Mercy

Pope Francis likes to use the word 'Mercy' in Spanish where it is not a noun but a verb. We cannot meditate on mercy without it turning into action.

- What footprints do I leave behind in this world?
- Look back at your footprints over the years..... How many footprints of Mercy do you have?
- Footprints of Mercy are everlasting... Increase your footprints of Mercy.

List out at least 3 new concrete things - you would do - to pass on the touch of mercy you have received?

1)

2)

3)

† Singing of the Divine Mercy

Prayer

My God, my Lord, my Mercy Jesus

Change my blood as your blood

Change my body as your body

Change my soul as your soul

Let my works be Your works

Let my thoughts be Your thoughts.

† Concluding Blessing

Show us your mercy, Lord, and come to the aid of your people who call upon you as their shepherd and guide; restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Hymn – The Mercy of the Lord

Hymns are available online at www.faithline.in

Prepared by Fr Leon Cruz SDB, a Missionary of Mercy.

Contact No: 8087548925
