



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Loving Father,
You gave Your Son as a sacrifice for our sins. How can we be unforgiving when we consider what He has done for us? Help us to gaze upon the cross whenever we fail to be loving and forgiving. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9

Over these last weeks, we have been challenged to examine the way in which we are loving and forgiving. Our readings this week allow us to continue our theme.

Rarely do we fall in love. Falling in love may happen only a few times in a person's life. More often than not, we must will ourselves to love. Even within the context of marriage, love is work.

Our love for God is no different. "Seek the Lord while He may be found," says Isaiah. This is something that we must do at the beginning of our day, within our day, and at the end of our day. It's work.

Love - even love for God - requires prayer and prayer is work. In fact, the word "Liturgy" means public work. Our Sunday Mass, our Liturgy of the Hours, our gatherings for Adoration all require work. Liturgy doesn't just happen, because our love for God doesn't just happen. Love and liturgy require seeking the Lord and calling on Him "while He may be found."

More than anything, our love for God means letting go of our old ways, our anger, our pride, and learning to forgive - to forgive ourselves, others, and God.

Turning to the Lord who is loving and forgiving makes our work a little easier. The more we spend time with the Lord who loves us, the more we are able to love and forgive.

Question

How do I work at loving God, others, and even myself?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Philippians 1:20-24, 27

Letting go of our old ways, and trusting in the Lord does take work. It is a daily task. Thankfully, we won't have to work at loving forever. When we die and rise with Christ we will live in Eternal love.

This thought occupied the mind and heart of St. Paul who longed to be with the Lord. For to Paul, "life is Christ, and death is gain."

St. Paul knew that he had to die to the things of this world in order to live with the Lord in heaven. This was his daily practice, his work, and his liturgy.

While he still journeyed on earth, he was caught between a zeal to be in the eternal home of the Lord and a zeal for his ministry to the churches

that he had established.

Having a zeal for both heaven and the mission entrusted to us while on earth doesn't just happen. It too takes work. While we dwell here, we must always keep the mission of Christ before us. We must be zealous about it.

The temptation is to slow down on our mission and take a rest from our work for the Lord. When we do that, we become complacent and lose our desire for heaven. Moreover, we become too acquainted with the passing things of this world as if this world is our final destination.

However, we should ask St. Paul to pray for us on our journey and say with him, "I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better."

Question

Do I have a zeal to be with God in heaven?

This is the third of a three week series,
Loving and Forgiving
Information: dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood

Loving & Forgiving: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

This parable hardly seems fair and just.

Putting in a hard day's work in the vineyard and finding that my pay is the same as the person who worked only one hour. Where is the justice in that?

Of course, working for the Lord is an entirely different thing. Love is work. But the benefits remain the same for those who have been on this mission and labor of love for years or even for a few minutes. The Lord Himself is our benefit and our inheritance.

It is impossible for our God to give just a little of Himself to some and more of Himself to others. Through His Son, he gives us his entire self.

Of course, anyone on the mission of the Lord who works hard to be loving and forgiving is joyful when a person comes to the Lord even, in their final hour on earth.

It is impossible to labor in the vineyard of love and - at the same time - be envious of those who come late to the Lord.

Question

How long have I been working in the Lord's vineyard of love and forgiveness?

This Week's Task

This week, our Church celebrates the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul. We remember the Vincentians who are dedicated to serving our brothers and sisters in need.

Many parishes have St. Vincent de Paul outreach centers. You are invited to get involved and assist those who need a hand.

You may also want to visit the following site and learn more about Vincentians:

<https://www.svdpusa.org/>

Group Prayer

The group prays together the following:

Why do You forgive us?

We sing your praises in liturgy and with the same tongue we curse others.

Why do You forgive us?

We say we love You and still keep sinning.

Why do You forgive us?

We thank You for your blessings and then refuse to bless others.

Why do You forgive us every single time?

Continue with Psalm 103

Psalm

“Are you
envious
because
I am
generous?”

The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

The LORD is just in all his ways
and holy in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Conclude with an Our Father