24C

MDP of God

All our readings today speak about mercy

1st-God’s mercy on the Israelites in not destroying them for their sins

2nd-God’s mercy on Paul – a man who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, an arrogant unbelieving man

And of course, in our Gospel- the Father’s mercy on the prodigal son.

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These readings remind us that God *wants t*o be merciful to us – God wants to forgive us – God gives us the grace of repentance so that we can be saved.

And that’s certainly such a hopeful message.

I’d like in a special way to draw your attention to Moses – and his mercy and love for the people entrusted to him –because the fact is, God is so merciful to us- ***He wants us to be merciful to others***, and I think that Moses is a tremendous example of that

Remember these people had constantly complained about Moses – **constantly complained**

When Moses came back to Egypt and spoke to Pharaoh – *originally Pharaoh made it harder on the people*

So the people complained against Moses –“Look what you’ve done, get out of here, we don’t need your kind of help”

When the Egyptians pursued them – They complain again, “we’re going to die, Moses you idiot, look what you’ve done to us”

After they got in the desert – “Moses we’re going to starve – weren’t there enough graves in Egypt – you brought us out here in the desert to die! –It’s all your fault Moses”

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After God gave them the Manna – and they were living on that for a while, they come to Moses and say, “We’re tired of this stupid food – give us some meat- there was plenty of meat in Egypt – there were onions and garlic and vegetables- now we don’t have any of that – **it’s all your fault Moses**”

Another time they had come and said, “Moses, there’s no water. We’re going to die in this desert. We were better off in Egypt – then you had to come and but your nose into things. We’re going to die out here and it’s all your fault.”

*So I think it’s remarkable* when God says He’s going to destroy these people, *Moses intercedes for them*.

I think a lesser person would have said, “**Go ahead. I’m tired of them too!” Right??**

But not Moses – *he intercedes for his people* – he prays for them – he prays that God will be merciful. He prays God will forgive them.

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Despite all their complaining – moaning against him – blaming him for all their problems-never thanking him for leading them out of slavery [*they were slaves*, he helped free them and instead of thanking him, they always complained] –**despite all that--** Moses **loved** his people.

I’d like to hold Moses up as an example to you – be merciful to the people around you

Those of you who are married – your spouse isn’t perfect [you don’t need me to tell you that right? – You’re already very aware that your spouse isn’t perfect] – *love him* – **love her anyway.**

Your spouse might be a complainer – your spouse might moan and groan everything wrong is your fault – your spouse might not seem grateful for the things you’ve done for him or her – *love them anyway*

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You know my friends, this week we were powerfully reminded that we don’t know the day or the hour when the Lord may call us home- this past Wednesday our nation remembered the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks

I can’t help but think of thousands of people who went to work or the airport on September 11th, 2001 – *thinking it was just another day*, **not knowing it would be their last**

How many told their spouse, they loved them? How many hugged their kids and said they loved them?

*I would imagine for some* – their last words to their spouse or children was some complaint – some snide comment – maybe a put down

How many remaining spouses or children, right now are regretting that they didn’t say, “I love you” – had complained about some **petty** thing.

If you were to die right now, what was the last thing you’ve said to your spouse – to your kids – to your brothers or sisters - parents?

Folks, *we all need* **God’s mercy** –*so be merciful to each other*

Your spouse isn’t perfect- your kids aren’t perfect- your parents aren’t perfect – your grandkids aren’t perfect – your grandparents aren’t perfect – your brothers and sisters aren’t perfect ---**love them anyway**

[*Moses did* – If he could love those complaining, hard hearted Israelites, we ought to be able to love those in our families]

Don’t make mountains out of molehills. Don’t focus on the failings.

The fact is, ***God has put every person in your life for a reason***.

You’ve got to know – there is no one God has put in your life, because he wants you to hate them [ might hate what they do, but He doesn’t want you to hate them]

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You’ve got to know- there is no one God put in your life so that you can become a bitter, resentful person.

You’ve got to know- there is no one God put in your life so that you can hold them in contempt [again, what they do you might hold in contempt – it’s the old love the sinner hate the sin idea]

That’s the whole idea of the prodigal son parable

The main character is the older son [ three parables – lost sheep, lost coin, lost son – when you find a sheep – you rejoice – find a coin – your rejoice – find a lost son,-why aren’t you rejoicing why do you hold him in contempt?]

The older son, was like the Pharisees – sinners are coming to God, and the Pharisees rather than rejoicing---*they’re holding them and Jesus in contempt*

Jesus is asking—why aren’t you rejoicing?

You’ve got to know, that everyone in your life is there for a reason

They’re not there so that you can become bitter- hateful- or resentful

They are there so you can learn patience- mercy – give of yourself even when it doesn’t seem to be appreciated – how to love as God loves

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Moses learned to love as God loves – he loved those ungrateful, complaining Israelites

*God wants you to learn to love as He loves too*

Do you have a spouse who is sometimes a pain in the derrière?

Loving him or her is a wonderful place to learn to love as God loves

Do you have children who don’t listen – who complain that you haven’t done enough for them?

Loving them is a good way to love as God loves

Do you have parents who just have the most unreasonable rules? Who expect too much? Who make you do ridiculous things, like your homework, or clean your room, or cut the grass – and all kinds of other unreasonable demands?

Loving them is a great way to learn to love like God

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Do you have brothers or sisters who drive you crazy? Do you have what you consider to be the in-laws from hell? Do you have co-workers that make Osami Bin Laden seem like a nice guy?

Have mercy on them!

Don’t hate! Don’t be resentful! Don’t allow bitterness to fill your heart.

Loving them – being patient with them – wanting what is best for them – *is a good way to learn to love as God loves.*

My friends, if we who are Catholic – we who have Jesus’ gift of Himself in the Eucharist – God’s holy Word – God’s commandments to guide us and lead us

If we can’t love, who can? – If Catholic husbands and wives can’t love each other *– men and women who vowed to love each other for the rest of their lives can’t put their differences behind them-* children and parents don’t treat each other with love – brothers and sisters can’t be kind to each other – workers can’t be patient and kind to their bosses or employees or their co-workers [ even though they might be idiots]—[If we can’t love, who can?]

Then what chance is there for Palestinians and Jews to sit down in peace?- For the Osami bin Laden’s of this world to stop hating?

Folks, if we want peace – If we want a world without hate. If we want the violence and destruction to stop

**Then it has to start in our own hearts**- in our own homes – with our own families – in our places of work

**It has to start with us**

[Let’s stand together – sing, “Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.] #526 in the Broken Bread books