

Homily. 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 12/13 September 2020.

There are many things that God does for us, like giving us this world and our lives and renewing them. With our co-operation and help, God wants to work with us in making our planet into a better home for humanity and our lives happier, more complete and meaningful.

As well as this God also wants to save us from the worst within us, from our selfishness, greed, arrogance and other destructive tendencies. To achieve this God came as one of us in Jesus, forgiving and loving us into a new and richer way of living and God offers to guide us still by the gift of the Holy Spirit living in us. Yet, there is one thing that God can't do for us and that is make us forgive and be kind, understanding and caring towards each other. Only we can do this for others for this power relies on our choice and will and is our responsibility.

In the 'Our Father' Prayer we ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who offend against us. When we say this prayer we admit that God is a loving, generous and merciful Father to us all and that we are one family, brothers and sisters together. We ask God to forgive us our sins and failings and we promise to pass this mercy on, forgiving each other as we have been forgiven in Christ. If we accept God's many goodness's and gifts, and especially the costly forgiveness we have received through the sacrifice and death of Jesus, aren't we obliged to do the same for those who are in our debt, having hurt, let us down, deceived or even betrayed us? The parable in Matthew's gospel says that we are so obliged.

Of course, we can only do this if we're aware of how much we have been forgiven, of our many big debts wiped away by God, and if we're open to

the loving mercy of God which is one of the most important ways that the Holy Spirit manifests Herself within us. But then, how can we even begin to accept God's forgiving love if we're closed off to the action of the Holy Spirit? We can't, obviously enough, because it's the Spirit of God that makes the mercy won in Jesus Christ available to us today, especially at this moment and within this Eucharist. As I like to put this; it's the Holy Spirit that makes the work of God relevant and accessible to us right now.

St. Paul says that the life and death of each of us has its influence on others so that whether we live or die we belong to the Lord. This is absolutely true if we keep the Lord and His saving work for us at the centre of our lives. This is what the gift of Holy Spirit does for us if we'll accept the Spirit's presence and comfort and listen to Her guidance. As for the evidence that we're doing this we need look no further than the generosity, forgiveness and understanding we offer to those in our debt, receiving from us a small measure of the mercy we've received from God.

This is our part to play in God's plan for a renewed humanity and a better way of living for all. It's upon us and within our power alone to forgive our neighbour the hurt they do us so that when we pray in the Spirit our own sins will be forgiven. After all, we are fellow servants and the family of the One God who chooses to be kind to the ungrateful and to sinners, the same God who gives over to us the power to pay mercy forwards to those in our debt.