

Homily: 16th Sunday: Cycle A: 2023: Wis 12: 13, 16-19; Ps 86; Rom 8: 26-27; Mt 13: 24-43

“The Power of God’s Love can Transform our Life – What is Our Response?”

1. **God’s kindness is amazing!** As the reading from the book of Wisdom points out, “... *though You (God) are the master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be **kind**; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.*” **Do we believe this?** Or do we view God as a harsh taskmaster who is going to get us? Or as a wimpy guy who lets us do whatever we want and then we can still go to Heaven? **HAHA.** **The truth is in the middle - God is both just and merciful.** Remember God is just - but also kind and patient because He wants all of us to repent and not end up like the weeds in the field, burned up in the fire (Hell) - scary! **Hell is indeed real** - (in fact Jesus talks more about Hell than about Heaven in the Gospels) - **but God will do whatever He can in His power to prevent us from going there, but we must freely cooperate with Him**, to grow in friendship and union with Him in this life, hopefully more each day – then carrying over into eternity.
2. Once we experience God’s kindness: *His overwhelming love of each and every one of us, both as a people and as individuals*, we should be not only be amazed but **want to respond** in return: to admit, yes, we have sinned and are sinners, but to realize that is not the end of the story – God’s love can transform us to become more like Him on a **daily** basis: just and holy, and kind toward everyone around us. To have a **magnanimous** (big hearted) spirit and outlook on life – instead of being petty. It is so exciting and invigorating God’s holy love! It brings joy and peace and real life to our souls. But we must accept it; He won’t force it on us.
3. **How do we practically discover the reality of God’s love and kindness?** Through growing in prayer. We should know from studying our **Catechism** that there are 4 pillars to the Catholic Faith: *The Creed, the Sacraments, the Moral life and Prayer.* Prayer is the pillar that roots, everything else in our Catholic faith life, in the personal love of God. **Without a deep prayer life**, the Catholic faith

seems like a lot of tedious rules that has little to do with the modern world, or as the kids say “IT’S BORING”! **With a deep prayer life**, the reality of the Catholic faith comes to be seen in its true dimensions: that it is the treasure beyond price which transcends all time and space. It is **the key** to ultimate meaning and purpose because it puts us into direct contact with the living God - who is the source of all Goodness, Truth, Life, Love and Beauty. It gives us the peace beyond human understanding that the world can neither give nor take away from us, which Jesus talks about in the Gospel of John in His Last Supper discourse. How are we called to pray? *Simply and quietly with a loving heart like talking to a friend. Prayer is a relationship, not a monolog where we just rattle off our intentions.* **Sacred Silence** is so important in this regard - which takes a real effort for us noisy modern people, with our headphones, computers, cell phones, TVs and radios often going non-stop- 24/7! Give more time to quiet prayer each day - (esp. in front of the Blessed Sacrament: come to the Friday 3 pm Holy Hour, before Mass, after Mass), to reading and reflecting on the ***Sacred Scriptures, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Lives of the Saints*** – and then the Holy Spirit will then transform our life beyond imagining. God will become increasingly the center of our life. We will come to believe more deeply in the truth of our Faith (**the Creed**) which will lead to a greater participation in the life of the Church (**the Sacraments**) and that leads a new outlook on life, in everything we say, think, and do - to live the new life of the Holy Spirit (which is **the Catholic moral life**). Remember as St. Paul says today, “*the Holy Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows the intention of the Spirit because He intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.*” Truly the Holy Spirit will lead us on the narrow path to Heaven – if we ask Him daily to help us in humility and in faithfulness to God’s will – all in a spirit of love and prayer. God bless you.✠

Recommended reading:

All from Fr. Thomas Dubay and published by Ignatius Press - the following are great books to give us the spiritual map and to help us grow in prayer over time:

- 1. Deep Conversion, Deep Prayer. 2. The Fire Within. 3. Prayer Primer.**