

The Great Physician's Love

Homily for February 25, 2023
Saturday After Ash Wednesday

In today's Gospel Jesus tells us that he is the Doctor who cures the sick: "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners." It is a statement open to all people in need of redemption. It is an affirmation that shows us that God is not exclusive. Christ has come for all sinners, and he extends to everyone his call to repent and be transformed by his grace. It shows us that Christ wants to reach everybody and forgive everybody. He is not like us, who discriminate and hold grudges. When someone sins more, God makes particular efforts to reach that person and offer his pardon and his elevating grace. What an example for us to follow when we have difficult moments in our dealings with others! Christ teaches us patience. Christ teaches us that we must love and build bridges whenever the opportunity arises.

This means as well that as St Peter's parish we are called to evangelize the sick. Christ sets the example and sends us to evangelize people who do not know him, or who offend him knowingly, half-knowingly, or even unknowingly. Interestingly enough, it is those who oppose Christ whom he calls the "righteous," because they are inflexible, and their criteria cannot be bent. Christ calls us, on the other hand, to forgive, as often as is necessary (Luke 17:4). We need to learn how to forgive in a world that tells us to be tough and not to let anything get past us.

For this to happen we need to remember that forgiveness can only come from love and lead to love. Today's Gospel reminds me of the story of the adulterous woman who was brought before Jesus in John 8. The Law of Moses was clear, yet Jesus knew that something had to be changed for man to be able to reach heaven. He knew that only forgiveness and love for everyone would unite all men and women in paradise. He knew all people had sinned, and therefore they could not accuse someone else without indirectly accusing themselves. That is why Christ answered to those who accused the adulterous woman, "Let the one who is sinless cast the first stone" (John 8:7). We are all sinners. We all need to be forgiven and to forgive one another. We all need to allow love to invade our hearts so that it may be the bond that reunites us.

Isaiah says in today's first reading that it as we cultivate a community of disciples who emulate our great physician Jesus that rather than pointing the finger we will offer our food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted. Then says the Prophet:

*your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday¹
The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,*

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#) (Is 58:9–10). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

*like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.*

With this in mind may you consider the following as a resolution for today:

I will think of the people I dislike or am indifferent to, and I will consider at least one of their good qualities. If the opportunity arises, I will speak well of them, and if I can, I will do a good deed for them.

Let us pray: Thank you, Lord, for giving me the solution to my life. Help me to forgive wholeheartedly those who have done me wrong. Help me to love them, pray for them and do good to them even though they hinder and harm me. Help me to strive tirelessly to bring to the world your solution to division, discrimination, hatred, and war.