

MARCH 31, 2022
Thursday of the 4th Week of Lent
Exodus 32: 7-14; John 5: 18, 31-47

“THE POWER OF PRAYER TO FORGIVE.”

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave the prayer to the Father. The prayer was called the Our Father. Humble and persistent prayer to the Father makes His heart soft and loving. Not that our prayer can change His nature, but His love and compassion are His nature. When God was furious to the people of Israel when they worshipped gods, the image of calf and not Him, Moses intervened or prayed to God to spare them. Moses said: “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.”¹ This is the power of prayer and the saving action of God to those who humbly pray to Him and ask for forgiveness. Moses “intercession foreshadows that of Christ, who won forgiveness for our sin on the Cross. Of course, this is not at all the kind of God the New Testament asks us to believe in. We should be careful about speaking of our God in such anthropomorphic (humanlike) terms. God does not get angry; he does not take revenge... Our sinfulness brings its own punishment because every sin is a denial of what we are meant to be and become. As with most passages of Scripture, what we need to look at here is not what is being said and done but at the underlying meaning of

¹ Exodus 32: 11-14 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

the passage. The emphasis here is on the thanklessness of God's people and on God's readiness to forgive and give them another chance."²

Jesus in the gospel is teaching us the same way, giving us many chances to listen and do what God commanded us to do. He is doing the Father's works as He is the Son of the Father, loving and forgiving those who sinned and does not follow or believe in Him. He opened Himself to Jewish authorities, but they do not listen instead ridicule Him. They even seek to kill Him because he broke the Sabbath and calling God His own Father. Jesus gave them many chances and opportunities, but they shut down their hearts. Forgiveness will never be achieved if we do not open our hearts and soul to the forgiving and merciful God. Likewise, God will not forgive us if we do not forgive our brothers and sisters.

Let us ask that through prayers and sacraments especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, the Lord will forgive us and likewise, forgive our brothers and sisters from our hearts. We pray that those experiencing difficulties to forgive may be enlighten by the Holy Spirit and touch their hearts. Like Moses, let us implore the love and mercy of God to spare us from destruction, end the war and conflict, and peace may reign in our hearts and in the world. Through our prayers and sacrifices, God will hear us as He heard Moses' prayer and intervention. Let us bow down to the Lord, He will grant our request as we say 'Lord, have mercy on us and forgive us as we forgive others.'

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie