**“God’s gift of Compassion”**

All our readings today point us to the phrase, **“God’s gift of Compassion.”** Our God is a merciful, loving, and full of compassion God. He shows love to those who are compassionate to others who are afflicted. He blesses them with virtues and the gift of peace. We should always thank Him by petitioning Him, asking for His compassion and rejecting all forms of empty works that leads to death.

Even on the cross, His compassion radiate with eternal light as the sword pierced His side and came close to His heart so that He could feel compassion for us in our weakness. He told us He could never forget us even though a mother might forget the child of her womb. His mercy is richer than that of a mother who might forget the child of her womb. He is our God who is richly compassionate towards those who love Him.

In our first reading, through Prophet Isaiah, **God’s gift of Compassion** was shown to us by inviting us to His banquet here on earth. God invites those who have the fire in their belly to open up their hearts to receive His word, come to Him, and receive living water. This prefigures our baptism into Christ who gave us the sacrament of baptism. That is when we receive the Holy Spirit the source of the living water. It is a free gift that we do not have to pay any money for. All we have to do is, accept the free gift with our free-will.

God appeals to us not to waste our time by going after things of this world that do not last. Things such as fame, power, money, and pleasure. He employs us to listen to Him who knows what is best for us, so we can have what we could never have on our own. This gift will also give us everlasting life. God in His compassion, promised to renew us with His gift of everlasting covenant.

God said, He will give us bread to fill us up to the brim. That covenant is what Jesus Christ fulfilled at the last supper when He said, **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”** His blood is the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, which prefigures His banquet of life awaiting us in heaven. God does not want anyone to miss out on this gift. That is why He used the words “**Heed**,” “**Heedfully**,” “**Listen**.” which has the same meaning through Prophet Isaiah in our reading.

In our second reading, Through St. Paul, God continued in the light of the message He gave us through Prophet Isaiah by asking us, what in this world could separate us from the love of Christ? That love of Christ is His gift to us. It is His gift of the Eucharist that He has left us. Paul eloquently gave us three lists of which we have two in our reading. To Paul, they should not be obstacles in our way to receive this amazing gift only God can give us.

Paul’s first list that is not in our reading is about the possible challenges in our humanly formed court system. Then Paul listed seven different experiences such as “anguish, distress, or persecution that happens in our life time that could cause us pain and suffering. Then in his last list, Paul mentioned seven mystical and superhuman forces that are beyond human power such as death, life, angels, principalities, and present things to mention a few.

Paul considered all in the three lists as powerless forces that are unable to separate us from the surpassing love of God He has for us as manifested in Christ. You see, my brothers and sisters, food is a sign of love! However, we receive Supernatural food in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the love of Christ which is ***God’s gift of Compassion.*** Paul says by the grace of God, we are ultimately invincible and we cannot be separated from **God’s gift of Compassion** by anything or anyone on earth or in heaven.

In our Gospel reading, in the spirit of the message of Prophet Isaiah in our first reading, when the people who were listing and heeding His voice were hungry, Jesus fed them with earthly food that was sustaining but that do not last. However, this prefigures the supernatural, nourishing, and more beneficial food Jesus wanted to give to His followers. Jesus wanted to give us a food which is not just belly filling and merely earthly life sustaining, but food and drink that make us grow maturely and spiritually into everlasting life.

That food is the Eucharist! We know this by what He did at the feeding of the 5000. Matthew wants us to notice that Jesus performed the same action, in the same sequence as He did at the last super when He instituted **God’s gift of Compassion,** the Eucharist. In both instances, we hear that Jesus takes bread, says a blessing, breaks it, and gave it to His disciples.

However, at the feeding of the 5000, Jesus gave the multiplied bread and fish to His disciples to distribute to the hungry people. While at the last supper, He gave His body and precious blood to His disciples to eat and drink and then He commanded them to perpetually do the same in His remembrance by giving the Eucharist to all His faithful followers.

That is what only the Catholic Church is still doing today. His Church built on Peter and the apostles is still breaking bread every day in remembrance of Him. The key to the “remembrance,” is the actual eating and drinking of **God’s gift of Compassion;** the nourishment in His body and blood He has given us in the Eucharist.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us thank Jesus for **God’s gift of Compassion.**