**“Our Merciful God”**

All our readings point us to, the ‘mercy of God. ’Our God is a merciful God who is always searching for us. God is rich in mercy. Because of His great love for us He brought us to life in Christ so He can love us as He loved His only begotten Son. He is always waiting for us to come back to Him. He wants our heartfelt repentance which leads to His mercy and forgiveness.

In our first reading, God showed His abundant mercy by telling Moses to go down quickly to see what his people were doing. Moses’s people were braking God’s first commandment not to have any other god besides Him. They were worshiping a golden molded calf Aron claimed just came out of the fire by his throwing gold into the fire.

God in His mercy wanted Moses to intercede for them. Moses with his free will, did a great job of interceding for them and God was merciful and relented on His anger. We too must not forget to intercede for those we are to pray for. When we know somebody is sinning against God, we should pray for them and God would hear our prayers and help them see the light through their repentance. Patient and generous is God in dispensing His mercy. He does not give in to human impatience but He is willing to wait for our repentance.

Paul in our second reading admitted that at one time he was a bad apple and a blind guide to blind people. To him, he persecuted Christians with good intentions. However, his actions were wrong. He recognized that it was by the mercy of God that his blindness was removed and he received the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Once Paul received the gift of faith, and knew the truth, he was not timid but rather almost became obsessed in guiding others to the Christian faith in Jesus he received through God’s mercy.

It was through the compassion and mercy of God that Paul was forgiven for his past transgressions. He became a zealous apostle who totally gave himself to the preaching of the Gospel. Like Paul, we must not despair that God would not be merciful to us no matter how great our sins might be. We must remember that God’s greater mercy would take away our greatest sins, if we repent of our sins.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus gave us three examples of how we can have an idea of the depth of the mercy of God. Although during His ministry Jesus reached out to everyone in mercy, not everyone responded to His mercy. Especially the Pharisees who in their own eyes were self-righteous. In response to their pride, Jesus said He came to call sinners who were conscious of their weakness and are not prideful.

Jesus somewhere in the gospels told us to be like little children who in one minute could be fighting over a toy and in the next minute, you will see them hugging and playing with each other. Children are not prideful but humble, merciful and loving with each other. That was why our Lord said, **“Whoever humbles himself, like a little child, will be greater in the kingdom of heaven”** (Matt 18:4).

In the parable of the lost sheep and lost coin, Jesus points out to us that God in His infinite mercy, is not willing to give up on even a single person. No one is dispensable in the eyes of God even if we consider them not worth more than a sheep or a single coin.

In His third parable about the prodigal son, Jesus again gave a glimpse of how unfathomable God’s mercy is for us His children when we return to Him after repentance. The parable showed us how God is always patiently waiting for us to repent and return to Him. Our image of the father of the prodigal son is that of a merciful father who is always reaching out to his sons. First to the prodigal son and to the eldest son who was unmerciful to his younger brother.

The prodigal son represents each and every one of us. We do not have to look too far to see that each and every one of us, has been an irresponsible prodigal son or a lost coin or lost sheep. However, to God, we are too valuable to be abandoned. Each time we are lost, Jesus the Good Shepherd comes and put us on His shoulders to bring us to the fold which is His Church.

Jesus by His death, resurrection, and ascension has passed through the heavens. He entered into the presence of His Father and made Him turn in mercy to His creation so that all who believed in Him would receive eternal life. In essence, Jesus in His blood has made God turn to us in mercy and has reconciled us to His Father.

As we come to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for His grace so we could always respond to God’s mercy.