

HOMILY FOR TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C 2016

1. How important is mercy, does it really matter
 - a. Holy Father thinks it is important, declared this a Holy Year, Jubilee for mercy
 - b. For you and me does it make any real difference to talk about mercy
 - i. If we are good upright people, do we need mercy?
 - ii. Isn't it is meaningless
2. Now if we are not as good and holy as we can and should be, then mercy becomes important
 - a. In baptism God has adopted us as His children
 - i. Told us He wants us to love Him with everything we have
 - ii. Neighbor as ourselves
 - iii. How loving are we these days, is God always first in our lives
 - iv. Are we really treating every neighbor as well as we take care of ourselves?
 - b. This will color our view of how merciful we need to be
 - c. If we believe we are being good and holy on our own strength, our thought is going to be why isn't everybody else as good as us
 - d. If we think, we have always been good people, we will judge others as less holy
 - e. If we recognize that we do fail in life to live up to our values and ideals, we will appreciate God's mercy and forgiveness
 - f. We will also be more apt be more understanding and forgiving of other people
 - g. To understand mercy, we need to know that we need mercy
3. In first reading we hear about a people that having been led out of slavery in Egypt
 - a. Moses chosen by God to be their leader has guided them to a new place
 - b. At Mount Sinai, Moses has gone up the mountain for forty days
 - c. People choose not to be grateful to God for giving them freedom and new chance for life
 - d. Essentially they get bored, decide they need a god who will be more exciting
 - e. They make a god in an image that they can relate to, a molten calf
4. The first reading illustrates how easy it is to be blind to ourselves
 - a. One would think that a people who have been slaves in Egypt would appreciate God who brought them to freedom
 - b. He had worked many wonders through Moses to get Pharaoh to let them go
 - c. But now they are in the desert and apparently bored since Moses is on the mountain receiving the covenant God will make with them
 - d. They decide to show their pride in themselves, making their own god in shape of calf out of molten gold
 - e. They celebrate with dancing and singing to this image that represents themselves
 - f. They are insulting God, saying it is not you who brought us out of land of Egypt
 - g. We brought ourselves out and this calf represents us
5. This kind of pride is really at the heart of every evil and sin
 - a. We usually know that path to joy and peace
 - b. We have a pretty good sense of what God expects and wants from us
 - c. But we in essence get bored
 - d. Something seems more attractive, so we choose that rather than the ultimate good of God

- e. This attractiveness could be sort of earthy such as gluttony, greed or lust
 - f. It could be spiritual or emotional such as anger, envy or lust
 - g. But the decision will boil down to a pride, I will make my own decisions rather than discern God's will
 - h. In pride we say we the gods of our lives
 - i. We can make our own decisions and make our own choices
6. The first reading goes on to express that God would be in his rights to be angry
- a. He could say, I am just going to start over
 - b. This free will and invitation to love is not working out
 - c. But Moses represents God's mercy
 - d. Through Moses God remembers the work He has already put into His people and the hope that he is offering to Him
 - e. So God does not destroy us when we sin and make ourselves into little gods
7. Jesus in gospel says not only does God not destroy us, He is totally indulgent with us
- a. Rather than punish us when we do wrong
 - b. God is like a woman who sweeps through the dust of a dirt floor to find a lost silver pieces even though she still has nine
 - c. Just as that woman will be so joyful that she found the lost piece that she will have to tell all her friends, so God will celebrate with all his angels if we turn back to Him
 - d. God is so concerned about us that He is like a shepherd who would leave 99 sheep in the desert in order to find that lost one
 - e. Or God is like a foolish father who is incredibly indulgent to his sons
 - f. Younger son says I can't wait for you to die to get my share of the inheritance
 - i. I want it now and gets it
 - g. This son manages to lose it all by being greedy, gluttonous and lustful
 - h. When the son comes to his senses and begs forgiveness
 - i. The Father welcome Him back with a party
 - j. The Father is also indulgent to the elder son who is angry and envious that the younger son is getting away with all this
 - k. Because his pride is hurt he insults his father refusing to join the party
 - l. Forces his father to beg him to come in and celebrate the return of his brother
8. In these stories Jesus is reassuring us that God does not want to punish us when we fail to be good and holy people
- a. Instead God is totally forgiving, doing whatever He can to have us return to Him
 - b. Even if we may feel like we have been so bad that we deserve God's angry punishment,
 - c. That is not how God works
9. God is always looking out for us, trying to help us to know that God us
10. Because He is so merciful, He will never give up on us