

## **We are the Recipients and Instruments of God's mercy**

***“To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy.... One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others.” (Catechism of Catholic Church, CCC no. 1489).***

The prayers, readings, and songs of the liturgy in this holy season of Lent invite us to a deeper reflection on our relationship with God and one another. The three-cardinal works- prayer, fasting (self-denial), and almsgiving (works of charity), which are the hinges of this season, are meant not to be a burden to us but means to experience and share in God's love. Our different responses to these works help us know the various aspects of our lives that need conversion, repentance, and reconciliation.

The readings of today in different ways remind us of the infinite mercy of God, the invitation to experience this mercy and become its agents in the world. In the first reading, the book of Joshua, the Israelites were celebrating arrival and the blessings they found in the Promised Land. They received these blessings because of God's mercy. God didn't allow them to perish despite all their sins while on the journey. Likewise, St. Paul uses inspirational words in the 2nd reading to express the gift of reconciliation God has given us through Christ. God has made us winners and agents of his mercy and forgiveness through this gift. Finally, the parable of the prodigal son in the gospel presents to us through the action of the father of the prodigal son, the immeasurable and invaluable mercy of God. This mercy reaches us if we acknowledge our sinfulness and ask for mercy as the prodigal son did. In addition, we must allow ourselves to become means through which the mercy of God flows to others. Let us not try to block the flow of this mercy as the prodigal son's brother wanted to do.

As we continue our journey in this holy season of Lent, let us reflect by asking ourselves: Do I trust and believe in the infinite mercy of God? Do I acknowledge my sinfulness or presume that it doesn't matter? Do I take the courage to ask for forgiveness from God or someone I hurt? Does the sacrament of reconciliation have any meaning for me again, or is it old-fashioned? Do I forgive and forget, or allow my resentments to influence my judgment of others? Let us pray that God will give us the courage and humility to respond to his mercy and be merciful to others Amen.

***“Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either” (Matthew 6: 14-15).***