

From the desk of the Pastor

God is Generous in Love

In the first reading of today's mass, we hear Moses speak these words: "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets!" This short reading teaches us about the generosity of God.

In the reading there are two men who receive the spirit of prophesy. Even though they were not present for the gathering outside the camp, nevertheless God gave them the gift of prophesy. Though they were perhaps disobedient and did not follow the instructions that were given to them, they still received the very same gifts that God gave to the men who were faithful. God gives his gifts to us even though we are not worthy of what he offers. I know with absolute certainty that the gift of the priesthood which God has lavishly bestowed upon me is a gift completely beyond anything of which I am worthy. If we are honest, all of us can say the same.

Undoubtedly, God has filled us with more grace than we could ever have asked for or even imagined. St. John in his first letter affirms this when he says, "We love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). God's love has transformed us, which allows us to love in return. His love has purified our hearts and made us worthy to receive and to give love to others. Because he loved me, even when I was yet unlovable, I have now been exulted to the love of the Divine. St. Paul reminds of the primacy of God's gift of love when he says, "but God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8).

My dear friends in Christ, I invite you to rejoice in the gratuitous, unmerited gifts that God has given you! While it is true that there is always some measure of suffering in our lives and that God always seems to bless us with some experience of his holy cross, nevertheless we are truly blessed. Count your blessings every day. Be aware of the many blessings you have received. The awareness of the blessings we have received will multiply peace and beauty within our lives. A friend of mine is very fond of saying *that a grateful heart quiets a complaining spirit*. He is absolutely right! When we have gratitude in our hearts for all the good things we have received from God, we will find it difficult to complain - even when there may be sufficient reason. God gives his gifts generously to all "for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45).

I invite you this week to give thanks. Even if there is cause for sadness, even if you carry the weight of a difficult cross, count your blessings! Think of the hundreds of blessings that you have received and be grateful to God. Begin your litany of thanksgiving with all the spiritual gifts you have received: grace, forgiveness, the promise of heaven, etc. Then move on to the gifts of others: parents, children, spouse, friends. Think next of your material blessings: house, car, food, clothing, etc. Finally count the blessings of your own life: your body, intelligence, laughter, breath, etc. Thank you God for all that we have and are. You are indeed a God of generous love.

Peace,

Fr. Dave