

## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY

*“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”*  
Luke 6:36

**Twenty- Sixth Sunday**  
**Fr. Max Oliva, S.J**  
**September 27, 2020**

The readings today highlight two virtues: mercy and humility. I have chosen to focus on the former: mercy.

In the Opening Prayer, I read “O God who manifests your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy...” The Psalmist begs God to remember his mercies through his compassion and love. In the Second Reading, from St. Paul points to Christ as possessing compassion and mercy. And in the Gospel we hear of God’s mercy even to tax collectors and prostitutes. These were open to Jesus’ teaching and his call to conversion. As writer, Nada Mazzei, puts it: “They recognized their need for forgiveness and responded with concrete faith.”

The readings point clearly to God’s mercy towards us, something we have each experienced – especially in the Sacrament of Confession. I can say without a doubt that my Vocation is a testament to God’s love and mercy.

This, however, is not the end of the story on mercy for we are to be merciful to one another. As Jesus says in another Gospel: “Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful.” Here is a story that illustrates this Call:

The following story is from an American Veteran who served during the Vietnam War:

“One day during the war I captured a young Vietnamese soldier. With his hands clasped on his head, the captive fell down on his knees and crawled. I was moved by the look of absolute terror in his eyes. I decided to ask him some questions:

“How old are you?”

Nineteen.”

“So am I. What do you do?”

“I am a student.”

“So am I. Do you have a girl friend?”

“Yes.”

“So do I.”

Then I reached into my knapsack and took out a tin of beans, gave it to the Vietnamese soldier, and let him go. At first he ran as fast as he could, zigzagging back and forth for fear that he would be shot in the back. Then suddenly he turned, raised the tin of beans high over his head, bowed a deep bow, and disappeared into the jungle. For him, it seemed, a tin of beans was a feast to be shared.”

Mercy.

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The Eucharist is one of God’s main gifts of mercy. In it we remember Jesus’ passion and death as well as his resurrection.

Divine Mercy  
Lamb of God  
And shepherd of our souls,  
You forgive and heal us  
When we ask with true humility  
For your merciful grace.

You take away the sins of the world  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As you ask us to forgive others theirs.  
Continue to shower your mercy upon us  
That with your help we may reach out in mercy  
To those most in need of your grace.

Help us, as we receive you in the Eucharist  
To be food for our hungry world  
By living the spiritual and corporal works of mercy  
In imitation of you  
With  
Compassion and courage.

As your disciples, may our prayer  
And our actions  
Further and deepen  
The reign of God  
Now  
And unto the life to come.

Amen.

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“The Virtue of Mercy”