

11th Sunday in ordinary time  
Annual Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign Convention

### ANOTHER SUNDAY OF MERCY

Another Sunday, whose whole theme is God's mercy. Pope Francis, is so anxious that the world draw closer to the God who created us with such love that he focuses our attention on mercy as "the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being being loved forever despite our sinfulness."

The common theme of God's unbelievable mercy ties together the first reading about King David's plea for forgiveness for his terrible sin of murder and adultery, and the Gospel about the sinful woman who throws herself on the mercy of Jesus as He dines at the house of Simon the Pharisee. Again, Pope Francis has said that Jesus is "the face of God's mercy."

David, the best king in all of Israel's history, had nevertheless given in to lustful desires. His desire for Bathsheba was so uncontrolled that he deliberately had her husband murdered, then took his attractive wife for his own pleasure. When the prophet Nathan very bravely confronts David about this sin, the King breaks down and begs forgiveness of God.

Considering all the great favors God had bestowed on David, protecting him from Saul, providing divine assistance against David's enemies, giving him a glorious kingdom, the king had already seriously offended God by his ingratitude. Add to this his serious sins of murder and adultery, and we are amazed that the Lord still loved David, and forgave him!

The Gospel gives us another instance of God's mercy at a banquet in the house of Simon, the Pharisee. A woman comes into the banquet room uninvited, and shocks the whole gathering by her actions. Bursting into tears, she falls at Jesus' feet. She breaks every social rule by letting down her hair, touching this man, and even kissing his feet! Then she pours soothing oil over those feet. Jesus not only does not prevent her from doing this, but even explains to Simon that her great faith has merited God's forgiveness for her sins. Then, Jesus concludes with a very human touch. Jesus points out to Simon that his neglect of providing water and oil for his guests as

they arrived, has been more than made up for by the behavior of this well-known sinner.

The Second Reading from Galatians tells us that faith is the necessary condition for receiving mercy. St. Paul's words declare that it is faith that merits God's forgiveness. Without faith, David would never have asked for God's forgiveness, nor would the penitent woman of this Gospel, whose great faith and love so pleases Jesus. Only through God's mercy, will we ever know the blessedness and joy of heaven.

### We and the mercy of God

God's mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful love, to become merciful in turn. Because God loved us first we are called to share His love with one another, with our neighbors.

In an ever new miracle, divine mercy shines forth in our lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbor and to devote ourselves to what the Church's tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. These works remind us that faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our neighbors in body and spirit: by feeding, visiting, comforting and instructing them. On such things will we be judged.

For this reason, I expressed my hope that "the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; this will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty, and to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy" (ibid., 15). For in the poor, the flesh of Christ "becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us" (ibid.). It is the unprecedented and scandalous mystery of the extension in time of the suffering of the Innocent Lamb, the burning bush of gratuitous love. Before this love, we can, like Moses, take off our sandals (cf. Ex 3:5), especially when the poor are our brothers or sisters in Christ who are suffering for their faith.

Dear brothers and sisters, like Mary, our Mother and Queen, let us become bridges of mercy, channels of the mercy of God. More, let us become missionaries of mercy for the greatest glory of God and the good of humankind.