

12 October 2008 – 40 Hours & Enthronement

LESSON: God's Generosity Is Unlimited

St Paul ends his Letter to the Philippians with a phrase that seems to be a **gigantic exaggeration**.

- ? Paul is writing this Letter from **prison**, probably in **Rome**.
- ? He is encouraging the Christians in Philippi to hold onto the **true faith**, and above all to keep their **fellowship united** through **humility** and **Christian charity**.
- ? Throughout this Letter Paul pens some of his **most famous phrases**.
- ? At the beginning of the last Chapter, he told the Philippians to "**Rejoice in the Lord - rejoice in the Lord at all times!**" (Philippians 4:4).
- ? And in the passage we just listened to, we heard a sentence that **throughout twenty centuries** has given **supernatural strength** to Christians suffering sickness, persecution, and horrible martyrdoms:
- ? "I can do **all things** through **him** who strengthens me."

In this time of great uncertainty – and even fear – isn't it good to hear these words? "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." We can do ALL THINGS! God will help us to be able to accomplish anything and everything – SO LONG AS our actions are rooted in Christ.

And at the very end of the Letter, St. Paul **reminds** them that God will **never be outdone** in generosity.

- ? He writes, "My God will fully supply **whatever you need**, in accord with his **glorious riches** in Christ Jesus."
- ? This short phrase reveals the **limitlessness** of Paul's **confidence in God**.
- ? It is a confidence based on the limitlessness of God's **resources, generosity, and goodness**.
- ? It is his way of **reiterating** what today's Psalm told us so beautifully: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... Even though I walk in the dark valley, I fear no evil..."

This is our God! **This** is our Lord! **Abundant** in his generosity, **limitless** in his mercy.

How good it is for us to be **reminded** of this again and again!

ILLUSTRATION: God Wants to Throw Us a Banquet

The same message comes across **powerfully** in today's Gospel.

- ? The king in the parable is inviting a **huge number** of people to a **colossal** wedding banquet.

- ? He is so **intent** on **sharing his joy** and **bounty** that when the first group of invited guests **refuses** to come, he gathers a troop of **strangers** to share his table!
- ? His generosity depends not primarily upon what the people **deserve**, but upon **his own abundant goodness**.
- ? No one had **earned** an invitation to the feast; it wasn't a prize for the most talented and gifted members of his kingdom; it was purely the **king's initiative** - a **beaming** example of true **nobility** and **magnanimity / generosity**.

This is an image of Christ, our Lord and King.

- ? His is a **feast of grace**, an **overflowing banquet** of **everlasting life** that begins now with baptism and reaches its fulfillment in **heaven**.
- ? No one can **deserve** that; it springs from his **bountiful generosity**, from his **longing** to share with us the **indescribable joy** of his own **divine existence**.
- ? By the mere act of **accepting** such an invitation we **honor and please** him; we let him love us.

This is the Banquet we celebrate in these coming days

- ? during our 40 Hours Eucharistic Devotions.
- ? God has prepared for us an overwhelming banquet
- ? a feast beyond compare
- ? that will provide for ALL that we need
- ? that help us to be able to do all things because it is this banquet which nourishes us.

The Lord invites US to His banquet – He invites US to come spend some time with Him in these days – He invites us to sacrifice our own time, to make the sacrifice to come here to Church and spend time with the Lord as he will be present on the altar in the Monstrance.

These are days of great grace for our parish – the Lord is inviting us to come be with Him – will we accept that invitation, or are we too busy to accept the Lord's invitation?

If we wish to receive all that the Lord wishes to give us to – we do well to accept the Lord's invitation to spend some time with Him these next 3 days.

APPLICATION: Conquering Discouragement and Being Like Christ

God has reminded us today that his **mercy and generosity are unlimited**.

There are **two very practical consequences** of this truth.

First, it is the **only thing** that can save us from **discouragement**.

- ? When we look honestly into our souls, we find a lot of **deep wounds**, pains, unresolved **conflicts**, and ingrained **selfish tendencies**.
- ? This is because we have all been **affected by original sin** and this fallen world.
- ? Whenever we see this part of ourselves, it can **stir up strong emotions** of anger, resentment, discouragement, or even despair.
- ? These emotions are **damaging** to us and those around us; they can **paralyze our lives**.
- ? That's when we **most need to remember** that God is **bigger** than our deepest misery.
- ? God's generosity and mercy are **limitless**.
- ? Compared to them, our **failings, needs, and sinfulness** are like a **Dixie-cup** full of dishwater compared to the **ocean**.
- ? Whenever we come face-to-face with our own misery, through **prayer and confession** we must run back to the side of our **Good Shepherd**, who knows exactly what we need.

The **second practical consequence** of this truth is that it shows us how we should treat other people.

- ? Jesus told his Apostles during the Last Supper, "Love one another **as I have loved you**" (John 13:34).
- ? If **his** mercy and goodness towards **us** are without limit, as the **crucifix** and His Presence in the Holy Eucharist prove, then **ours** should be without limit **too**.
- ? Of course, we can't live that way if we depend only on **our own strength**.
- ? But Jesus knows that, which is why, in just a few minutes, he is going to come and give us another share of **his** strength through Holy Communion.

How can we become more like Christ? Well, today and during these 40 Hours Eucharistic Devotions, I'm inviting **every member of our parish, every family in our parish** to dedicate their homes and their lives and their families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

If we give our lives to Christ – if we dedicate ourselves to imitating the hearts of Jesus and Mary, God will provide all that we need – He will help us to grow in holiness and to be more like Christ.

In this Eucharist which we receive every week in Holy Communion and which we reverence and venerate these next three days, the Lord offers us an invitation to become more like Him by spending time with Him and dedicating our families and lives to Him. As he offers us those invitations today, let's not walk away, claiming to be too busy, but let's put everything else aside – even sports to accept the Lord's invitation – and in doing so, be filled with all the graces we need to "rejoice always in the Lord."