

January 1, 2017

For a long time, I have thought about writing some of my homilies for my people, so that you may have a bit of knowledge about Christ in your lives and read them wherever you may be.

At the beginning of something new, we become full of goals and resolutions, as in this new year, 2017. We likewise promise ourselves the pounds we will shed, the debts we will pay off, the money we will save, the end of our drinking and smoking, or any other beneficial habit we will practice. But I would like to propose something new: to be a BLESSING AND TO GIVE A BLESSING.

In the first reading of Numbers, a book that was written more than 3,000 years ago, we hear about the way Moses teaches Aaron and his children how to give someone a blessing, saying:

*Nm 6: 22-27: The Lord bless you and keep you!*

*The Lord let his face shine upon*

*you, and be gracious to you!*

*The Lord look upon you kindly and*

*give you peace!*

It is a very simple prayer and blessing, which many people mistake for the Franciscan blessing, but it is Moses's for his sons and daughters.

When we begin our life in the Lord – in Baptism – the priest or deacon, at the beginning of the sacrament, invites the parents and godparents to bless the one being baptized by making a sign of the cross on their forehead. I always tell them that I hope it is not the last that they will bless this child, that every time they see him/her they will have the opportunity to bless them with the sign of the cross; this is a right and obligation of everyone who is responsible for the child.

It is a simple thing that brings great benefits to the life of the child. One example is my family. I was raised in a ranch, very humble, but there was great faith. My grandparents always gave me a blessing every night at the end of the rosary and before bed, and I would kiss their hands (because they were the hands that blessed me). Every time I would go far away (out of town), to school or college, my grandparents always gave me a blessing.

My grandmother would always remind me every time she called, when I was already a priest, that she blessed her children and grandchildren every night by making a blessing to the sky in every direction.

That is something so simple that has great benefits for children. Many times, we worry about knowing what is best for our children, and we forget that we have great power to share what is best with them.

The reality is that we ask ourselves, “how, if I wasn’t raised like that and am not used to this tradition?” It reminds me of a story in the book of Genesis, chapter 27, where Jacob steals Esau’s blessing from their father, Isaac, with the help their mother, Rebecca. First, Esau sells his blessing as firstborn to his brother for a bowl of lentils, not knowing what he was doing because he was young and naïve. He later regrets this reality and becomes very angered with his brother and father.

A blessing from a parent brings great benefits to anyone who receives it. If we use a blessing we sneeze, why should we only use blessings in small cases? The reality is that we can give blessings at all times and in every circumstance.

When you bless someone, remember that the blessing comes back to you, which is why I tell you a blessing is like a mirror, where everything comes back to you. This is why I invite you to be a blessing. The same thing happens when with cursing – it all comes back to one.

One of the things I like to do is bless the children who are in a mother’s womb because we know that there are many enemies attacking the most defenseless and vulnerable. This is why they need many blessings. Also, remember the blessing that the priest gives everyone at the end of mass; with it, you can be the BLESSING for others who live in darkness.

With this small resolution, we can change the world, starting with the person beside you. Being a blessing is a commitment and a duty of all Christians.

Being a blessing for others.

God bless you all.

Fr. Guadalupe Mayorga