

March 3, 2019

GIVE, AND GIFTS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU!

"**Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you!**" (Luke 6:37-38). This is the promise that Jesus gives us: if we give to others unconditionally, God will give us even more. If we are generous with others, including our enemies, we will benefit from the immense generosity of God. Every time we pray the **Our Father**, the most beautiful and best-known prayer given to us by Jesus himself (Luke 11:4, Mathew 6:12), we are asking God our Father to forgive us in the same way we forgive others. So, we are not surprised by Jesus' saying "Forgive and you will be forgiven", meaning: "**Forgive others and God will forgive you!**" However, here in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Luke 17-49), which we hear at Sunday Mass once every three years (Year of Luke), Jesus adds a new dimension on how God will respond to our actions: "**Give to others, and God will give to you!**" This is the message we all heard in last week-end's Gospel, and I would like to invite everyone to reflect on how this simple and powerful message applies to our own individual ways of interacting with those we encounter in our daily lives: family members, friends, co-workers, fellow parishioners, strangers...

This is all about the **power of giving freely and unconditionally**. None of us can fully imitate Jesus, who as a man displayed such power while on earth. Jesus is man but He is also God and we are humble human beings. However, Jesus invites all of us to get out of our comfort zone, and to strive for excellence: Be Holy! Be merciful as the Father is! We are all called to **holiness!** Be perfect as the Father is! Be generous as the Father is! Love everyone! Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you! To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well! **Give to everyone who asks of you!** From the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back! Stop judging and you will not be judged! In this amazing Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6), Jesus is raising the bar for his followers by going against the culture of his time! Jesus' teachings are as counter-cultural today as they were 2,000 years ago. **Jesus' promise is also as powerful as 2,000 years ago: If you follow me... your reward will be great and you will be children of the most high!**

Think about an experience of **joy** in your life. In many instances, it may be related to that **power of giving to others**. For many mothers, it may be the day of **giving**

life: The Joy of giving birth! For many of us, it may be a time when we were able to **help out someone in need!** For others, it may be when we were able to forgive others who have hurt us.

As we enter into the Lenten Season this Wednesday (March 6), we will all be reminded when receiving the ashes on our foreheads: "**Repent and believe in the Gospel!**" Our Lord Jesus Christ **gives** us the **good new, the joy of the Gospel!** At the Last Supper, Jesus promises us the **Gift of the Eucharist: His Body and Blood!** Then, after his Passion, Death and Resurrection, and just before he ascends into Heaven, he promises us that he will never leave us alone: he promises us the **gift of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit!** The Holy Spirit is at work not only in the seven sacraments, including the **Eucharist at Mass**, but also in every moment of our daily lives. The Holy Spirit **gives us the power to give generously and unconditionally.**

The theme of our Lenten Season is **The Gift of the Mass**. The Gift of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is the greatest gift we can receive! Many of you have already signed up to participate in the series **The Gift of the Mass** beginning this Thursday, March 7 (7 PM,) or this Saturday March 9th (10 AM). If you have not yet done so, you can still register online: www.olhoc.org/Mass.

Come Holy Spirit! Help us to forgive others, and to give generously to all we encounter! Come Holy Spirit, help us to enter into this Lenten Journey of Spiritual Renewal. Come Holy Spirit! Help us to be renewed through a deeper appreciation of the Gift of the Mass: The Eucharist!



*One in Christ,
Father Alain*