



03 February 2023

HOLY HOUR

“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” Lk 6: 36)

HYMN: No. 179. Humbly we adore thee, Christ, Redeemer, King. (*Joyful Celebration*) Or any other appropriate one.

(Pause..... for Moments of Silent and Personal Adoration before the Eucharistic Lord)

INTRODUCTION:

Dear friends, being in February where the Universal Church observes ‘**Thirtieth World Day of the Sick**’ on 11th Feb’ instituted by Saint John Paul II to encourage the people of God, Catholic health institutions and civil society to be increasingly attentive to the sick and to those who care for them. We shall focus on the theme chosen for it: “*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*” - Lk 6: 36) Dealing with an illness can be one of the most stressful and anxiety-inducing seasons of life. For those who are sick, it can be isolating and scary. For the loved ones of the ill, it can feel helpless and overwhelming. However, we never journey alone. Prophet Isaiah refers to Jesus as a suffering Servant acquainted with grievous suffering and compassionate attentiveness to the suffering humanity. It was by enduring the depths of suffering that He won for us redemption. If we endure our Calvary with Him, the glory of Easter shall dawn upon us.

LEADER:

As a faith community, gathered around Jesus our Divine healer, let us listen to a gist of the message of Pope Francis, Christ’s chief shepherd on this year’s theme for world Day of the Sick.

Merciful like the Father: God always watches over his children with a father’s love, even when they turn away from him. Mercy is God’s name par excellence. We can say with wonder and gratitude that God’s mercy embraces both fatherhood and motherhood (cf. **Is 49: 15**). God cares for us with the strength of a father and the tenderness of a mother; he unceasingly desires to give us new life in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, the mercy of the Father: The supreme witness of the Father’s merciful love for the sick is his only-begotten Son. He “went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people” (Mt 4: 23). He made concern for the sick, paramount in the mission of the apostles, who were sent by the Master to proclaim the Gospel and to heal the sick (cf. Lk 9: 2).

To touch the suffering flesh of Christ: Pope Francis urges healthcare workers, to let their service alongside the sick, be carried out with love and competence that transcends the bounds of their profession and become a mission. He says, “Your hands, which touch the suffering flesh of Christ, can be a sign of the merciful hands of the Father. Be mindful of the great dignity of your profession, as well as the responsibility that it entails”

Centres of care as “Houses of Mercy”: Pope Francis says, “Down the centuries, showing mercy to the sick led the Christian community to open innumerable “inns of the good Samaritan”, where love and care can be given to people with various kinds of sickness, especially those whose health needs are not being met due to poverty or social exclusion or to the difficulties associated with treating certain pathologies” He points out that at a time of culture of waste and lack of consideration for human dignity, “**Houses of Mercy** can be exemplary in protecting and caring for all life, even the most fragile, from its beginning until its natural end”.

Pastoral mercy: presence and proximity: If the worst discrimination suffered by the poor including the sick, who are poor in health – is the lack of spiritual attention, we cannot fail to offer them God’s closeness, his blessing and his word, as well as the celebration of the sacraments and the opportunity for a journey of growth and maturation in faith; says Pope Francis and he reminds all that closeness to the sick and their pastoral care is not only the task of certain designated ministers but of every baptized person, mindful of the words of Jesus: “I was sick and you visited me” (Mt 25: 36).

(Pause..... for Moments of Silent Personal Prayer)

HYMN: No. 304. O Spirit, Source of Wisdom (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 17: 12-19 (Healing of the Ten Lepers)

(Pause..... for few moments after the Scripture Reading)

REFLECTION:

We all live in times of entitlement, when the list of what we claim to be ours by right seems endless, leaving little space for gratitude for what we receive and have. Often so called outsiders are more responsive to God’s ways than God’s own people. Being born a Catholic can sometimes result in spiritual mediocrity. The Gospel passage offers us three primary lessons:

God is close to the Least: In our culture of platform building and instant fame, we are reminded that God notices the least. The ten Lepers were outcasts of society. Beyond just having leprosy at least one was from Samaria which would have made him the lowest of the low. Yet, Jesus treasured him and each one of us who approaches Him in faith.

God sees the Faith: The ten lepers weren’t healed until they acted in faith and obeyed what the law required of them (*Certification from a Priest*). We can surrender only if we believe in God’s authority over us and over everything else.

Gratitude is our due to God: God cherishes gratitude. Only the Samaritan out of the ten lepers turned back, fell at Jesus’ feet, and thanked Him. Jesus was very appreciative of this gesture. We have a God who waits in love for our gratitude as if it means anything to Him. I believe we offend Him when we take His gifts for granted and fail to be thankful.

HYMN: No. 195 I’ll sing God’s praises. (*Joyful Celebration*) or any other.

(Pause..... for Silent Self- examination of conscience in the light of the Gospel)

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

RESPONSE: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the sick and hospitalized: may they feel the healing power of Christ and find comfort and hope in His constant presence. We pray to the Lord: **R/**

For all Catholic healthcare workers: may they be a light to others and a testament to the Word as they live their faith and care for their patients. We pray to the Lord: **R/**

For those who do not have adequate access to healthcare: may we respond to their needs with love and compassion and seek creative solutions to bring healing to all. We pray to the Lord: **R/**

For the vulnerable and marginalized in society, including those with mental and physical illness: may they always be treated with dignity and respect as children of God. We pray to the Lord: **R/**

THE DIVINE PRAISES: *(For Benediction)*

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

CLOSING HYMN: Let us bow in adoration.... or any other appropriate one.

-Commission For Liturgy

Archdiocese of Bombay.